MY DAYS AS A POLICE MAN

George Phillips

Complimentary Copy

MY DAYS AS A POLICEMAN

To Shri Leela Dhar Pandey
who is a gentleman, every inch.

G Phillips
(GEORGE PHILLIPS) Author
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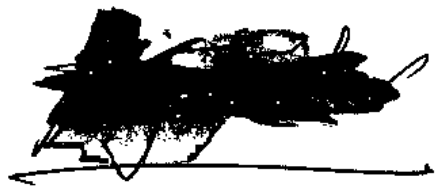

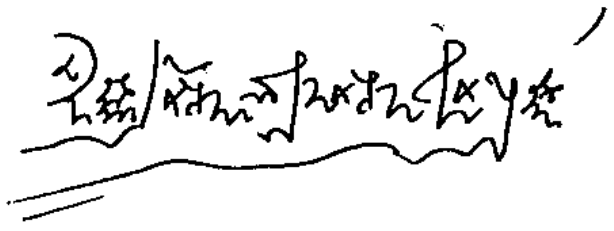

To

My lieutenants who braved many moments of Peril in daring adventures which might well have daunted the courage, confidence and endurance of less determined Policemen.

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Old Police Hierarchy

	Rank	Abbreviation
1	Inspector-General of Police	I. G. (P)
2	Deputy-Inspector General of Police	D. I. G.(P)
3	District Superintendent of Police	D.S.P.(now S.P)
4	Assistant Superintendent of Police	A.S.P.
5	Deputy Superintendent of Police	Dy.S.P. (now D.S.P.)
6	Sub Divisional Police officer (identical with Nos 4&5)	S.D.P.O.
7	Circle Inspector	C. I.
8	Sub-Inspector	S. I.
9	Head Constable	H. C.
10.	Police Constable	P. C.

Chapter 1

I Hunt for a Job

My parents migrated from the ancient princely State of Travancore (now merged in Kerala), during the fall of the last century and settled in Madurai, in South India. In this city, they established a Printing House which boomed into flourishing business. On the heels of an unprecedented trade recession in 1931, there was an economic cyclone. Most businessmen ran into their storm shelters. Some never emerged. Some were crippled. Only a few escaped with bruises. For my father, who fell into the second category, return to normalcy remained a distant dream. Unable to ride the fluctuating business deeps as on a surf board with bravado, he became a victim of hypertension, head-aches, physical weakness and nervousness, the sure symptoms of a state of mind, not at peace with itself.

Early in 1935, my father was struck down by an incurable type of paralysis. After holding him in its unmerciful grip for a week, the fell disease piloted him to the portals of death. I was only a Collegianer then. My financial condition was a pretty kettle of fish. Wading through a sea of troubles, I qualified for my Bachelor's degree in Arts in 1936. Absolute expediency coerced me to seek a berth with utmost dispatch, regardless of the status or salary involved.

Those were days of appalling unemployment. Graduates and post-graduates were seen in plethoric plenty in peripatetic groups, on the side walks of big cities, in sanguine pursuit of even phantom jobs.

While sauntering along the streets of Madurai, one day, fancifully footlose, I sighted a new building bounded by low walls. There was a chic sign board "Prudential Enterprises", at the gate, into which I headed. A rookie in watch and ward uniform, accosted me. On learning that I was a job seeker, he offered help. Delighted with his voluntary display of humanism. I dogged him. In a circumambience he ushered me to an exit gate, and enjoined that I leave the place forthwith Shocked and surprised, I shuffled my reluctant feet and lumbered along cheerlessly. I could do nothing but curse the man, who had taken me for a do-nothing. My attempts to get a foothold proved elusive, for days on end.

Browsing through the wanted columns of a newspaper on a Sunday, I espied the caption "Sub-Inspectors of Police-Vacancies of". All agog, I assimilated the advertisement. Some of the determinative factors, to qualify for the posts, were difficult for me to surmount. However, the intensity of my zeal to essay my luck, egged me on, with all animation.

The next day at 11.00 hrs. I called at the District Police Office. A constable on duty betokened the room of the Manager, now designated as Office Superintendent. After a couple of gentle knocks, I peeped in. A burly bespectacled figure was seated behind a large desk. He had brushed a bunch of hair from the right side of his head, all the way over to the left. Segments of shining scalp betrayed the motive behind his artistic effort. Having seen me, he lowered his eyes, affecting an air of gravity. The deep silence of the place was broken by the

uneven clatter of typewriter keys, emerging from a neighbouring room, and the tick-tock deliberation of an old wall clock, which told the time, on the corridor.

Sitting back after a few minutes, the offish official peered over his glasses, shot an enquiring glance, and pursed his lips like a child, about to cry. In a voice that was hoarse and in a style that was coarse, he croaked :

"Hey ; What do you want ? "

"An application form for a sub-inspector's post". I pleaded feebly, feelingly.

"If you are determined to waste a form, take one and run away from here, as fast as you can", he growled, pointing to a corner table. I had no doubt that his emphasis lay on the ultimate part of his oral fiat, which he uttered with a sharp snap of his stout fingers. Seizing my prize, I bounded out in a trice, to escape from a possible shower of unpleasant verbiage. My benefactor eyed me with a feral grin, as I was fleeing the place. I did not thank him, either by an expression of my sensibility, or with a nod of obeisance, for his charity, though disheartening. Any kind of spontaneous show of courtly conduct even on a more graceful or gainful occasion, was alien to my nature.

Back home, I congratulated myself on the victory in the first battle, in life's long war of existence. Settling down comfortably, I filled in all the columns of the proforma, carefully. Enclosing the certificates and other papers needed, I sent the bunch to the Superintendent of Police, Madurai South, in whose jurisdiction, I lived.

There were two stages in the selection process, the initial by the Superintendent of Police, and the final by the range Deputy Inspector-General.

Three weeks in advance, I was notified to appear before the Superintendent of Police at his office, on the first Monday of September, 1936. In right earnest I prepared to tryst with destiny. A two piece creaseless Hanava suit, and a white poplin shirt were got readied by a top bespoke tailor. A pair of shoes, socks and a silk tie were purchased. That the overall cost of all these was only Rupees eleven, should defy the credence of the most credulous men today. I refreshed my understanding of the optional subjects of my degree course, and updated my general knowledge. In vain did I labour to improve my constitution and carriage.

Chapter 2

A tryst with destiny

With an acuity of anxiety, I awaited the great occasion. The glamour and glitter of a 'policeman' job those days, were primarily the options, for an endless array of material benefits, that could be manipulated. Only a few desired to turn an honest penny.

On the crucial day, I was at the venue of interviews in good time. Prospective police officers in their best attire, strode in gradually, majestically. In their midst, despite my well-looking outfit, I resembled a caricature in a cartoon. My bodily configuration sharply detracted from the grace, my smart suit presented. Enough to say, I was only a bag of bones.

Aspirants for the jobs gathered in small groups eyed me with open-mouthed wonder. Many set off loud giggles, similar to those of city girls, who had seen a rural wench. Impulsively, I moved to what I thought was an isolated corner. Unfortunately, the niche, where I had ensconced was worse, as it came within the eye-shot, of more curious onlookers. To my unconcealed dismay, I became a derisive cynosure of all eyes around. Fond hopes swelling at my breast, started ebbing. Feelings of

buoyancy, and gladness yielded place to despondency and sadness. An ineffable gloom, settled on my mind, body and soul.

At 10.30 hrs., a clerk checked our interview cards with the alphabetical list of applicants, he had. This over, he directed us to occupy the wooden benches under a nearby shady tree, that skirted the office complex.

At 11-00 hrs. a maroon coloured automobile bearing registration M.D. 2122 crawled into the office compound, and pulled up in the porch. Khan Bahadur E.V. Amu Sahib Bahhdur, O. B. E., I. P., the Superintendent of police stepped out. He was a tall figure, shapely and stately, with a flawless white complexion and handsome face. Immaculately dressed in his uniform of khaki silk, he was indeed an eye-filling spectacle, none would tire regarding. He shot into limelight for his daring deeds of outstanding valour in quelling the historic Moplah Rebllion, in the old Malabar district of the composite Madras State, several decades ago. Recipient of many awards, and decorated more than once for gallantry, khan Bahhadur Amu was a shining jewel of the Madras Police Force. His vivid charm must have been a very real factor, for his success and popularity.

Within minutes of the S.P 's arrival we were hustled into his presence in the main hall. Two Police Officers in uniform flanked him on either side,

"Where are your boys?" he enquired of the duo Promptly they pointed out their sons.

"Don't worry, I will select them" said the S.P. baring his tobacco stained teeth, in a controlled effort, to execute half a smile.

With green and goggling eyes I viewed the twins for whom the doors of fortune had opened so

cheerfully and so easily. As each generation has the unique power to bequeath life to the next, the British Rulers believed that each generation of policemen had the discretion to decide who will be the next. The inevitable choice fell on their offsprings. The torch of service therefore, was handed down from father to son. This was an infallible technique to wrest hereditary loyalty to the Government For several families, police service was an internal relay race, which decelerated when there was likely to be a gap. In such an uncommon pass, the next of kin supplied the link with incredible sweep.

The S.P. retired to his room. After about half an hour, the interviews commenced. Each one was called in, seriatim. Waiting, made me tense. I suffered from an inferiority complex due to my forbidding appearance and forlorn countenance. "Had I only considered these handicaps earlier, this agony could never be mine" I regretted.

Having made an attempt, the complexion of the whole situation became different. Hence, though frightfully uncertain of success, I was frightfully eager to complete my efforts. But for this germane logic I thought, an about turn would have been my sole and sure choice for an escape from the cul—de—sac, into which I had steered myself, wittingly artlessly.

When at long last I was summoned, my pulse rate increased and my heart started pounding against my ribs faster than ever. with great trepidation, I jogged into the room of the S.P. and bowed my salutation. His strongly moulded features proclaimed an irate temper. The scorching glances he cast scotched my inner being. He enquired in detail about the sports and games conducted in the school and college where I studied, and the extent of my participation in these. I struggled hard to

enunciate the sentences that kept forming in my head but I could hardly talk. Most of the words died in my mouth and were buried in my throat. My voice was suffocated and I became flighty and fidgety. Constantly I licked my drying lips and clasped my irresolute hands. As my tongue wandered for words pathetically, the S.P. looked at me sympathetically. He repeated his questions. speaking softly and pleasantly in round tones, with an understanding accommodation. His attitude and resonant voice set at rest the vibrations of fear in my mind.

I regained my self-possesion, and spoke up with clarity. My negative answers to his positive questions left me in no illusion about the fitting finale of the interview. My hopes fell from me like a loosened garment.

With defeat and despair writ large on my face, I returned home. My friends and family members, who visualised the upshot of the interview, wisely refrained from vexing posers.

Chapter 3

A Surprise and a Gimmick

On September 10, orders about my selection in the initial interview were received by post along with a requisition for my medical fitness to the District Medical Offficer. I reacted to this news with surprise and joy.

The following morning at 10.00 hrs, I reported at the office of the D.M.O., then located in the old Hospital building in the heart of the city. About twenty others were already there for tests.

At 11.00 hrs, we were marched into the august presence of Lt. Col. P. Verdon of the Indian Medical Service. He was a British ex-army Surgeon who looked reserved, firm and serious. His office room unusually commodious was remarkable for its lucidus ordo. We were asked to strip ourselves naked, stand in a row and await our turn. For many' this was embarassing, though a handful looked normal in their birthday suits. Amidst the naked bodies on their legs there was one with a tonsured head With hardly any hair on his body, he looked like a plucked chicken. Captain B. Shanker Rao, another ex—army Surgeon assisted the District Medical Officer in the tests.

A comical scene was enacted by one amidst us, when summoned for physical measurments. He stepped forward, stood to attention and marched swinging his arms. At this display of naked drill,

the naked onlookers laughed their teeth loose. A cold glint came into the eyes of the British boss. His mouth cracked, but the crack did not extend.

A handicap I had, took the wind out of my sail. My contracted chest measured only thirty and half inches, against the required minimum of thirty one. I could get an expansion of two and a half inches to make the stipulated thirty three. It was my turn. I was asked to inhale and my expanded chest measured thirty three inches. While exhaling I held some breath in my lungs to make the required thirty one. The nimble Colonel who suspected a gimmick shouted in a vein of contempt.

"Open your mouth, you silly man" I obeyed. Suddenly he moved behind me and delivered a forcible blow on my back with his bunch of fives. Not letting my hair down, I continued to hold fast my breath. The measurement registered thirtyone inches. I developed pain on my back but that was negligible vis-a-vis the success that ensued. My Medical examination thereafter by the twin experts was hard-headed and hard-hearted. The duration of my ordeal was inordinately long and tediously intensive. Every part of my physical geography was explored and subjected to deep scrutiny to my profound agony. Time and again there was a prod here or a push there, and it looked as though they were buying a horse. When I mumbled my protest, I was humbled Silently I thanked my stars, when Col. Verdon burst out:

" The fellow is O.K, Push him out ".
I was too quick. Before being pushed out, I rushed out with an unbuttoned shirt, and ungirt pants. After a couple of hours of waiting, the fitness certificate was in my hands. I had successfully sabotaged the medical machinery. This is the real story though I am not proud to tell it.

Chapter 4

An open window.

Those who were successful in the preliminary interview, and thereafter declared medically fit were directed to be present at the office of the S.P , Madurai North on September 26 for the final selection by eht Deputy Inspector- General of Police.

Precisely at 11.00 hrs. Dewan Bahadur N. Ramanuja Iyengar, O.B E., I.P., the D I.G arrived in the car of Khan Bahadur Amu Sahib, who shared the front seat with the driver. Even in days by gone, such a spectacle was odd. Mr. Amu was noted for his unfeigned homage to his seniors He had climbed the official ladder from a most humble position. When the car come to a halt, he sprang out, opened and held the rear door, till Mr. Ramanujam, who appeared delighted, alighted.

" May I assist you, Sir ?" enquired Mr. Amu.

" No, thank you " said the D I G. softly, and turned his back, which the former dutifully saluted and withdrew.

Mr. Ramanujam was a trial baloon among Indian Officers to be elevated to the high rank of D.I.G., during the British rule, in the old Madras Presidency. He was smart looking with silvery gray hair neatly

parted at the centre. He bore the stamp of dignity and had the easy bearing of an officer of distinguished rank.

Our selection accorded with the principle of communal representation. Applicants in each community were interviewed en bloc. The windows of the venue of selection remained fully open and many witnessed the proceedings.

The interviews were in the following order:-

1. Brahmins.
2. Non-Brahmin Hindus.
3. Christians and Anglo-Indians.
4. Muslims.
5. Backward communities,
6. Scheduled castes and tribes.

Since Brahmins were interviewed first, many thought that the D I.G. who was a Brahmin believed in the supremacy of his caste, but there was nothing to bear out this belief.

when the interviews started, Messrs D C.T. Cameron and C.H. Jackets. Superintendents of Police of Madurai North and Ramnad districts stepped in. " Are we required ?" asked Mr. Cameron.
" It's very kind of you to have taken this trouble, thank you. I think I can manage" replied the D.I G. Thereupon, the two S.Ps. marched out. Ostensibly, Mr. Ramanujam did not want others to gather, that he had abdicated his authority, or revoked his responsibility. Being definitely beyond approach, he was decidedly above reproach. Unaided even by his personal assistant, he conducted all the inter views himself.

When my batch was herded in, we stood before our God on earth in a single rank with the solemnity such an occasion demanded. The D.I.G. appeared to experience fascinating fun at the sight of the hope

ful, and hopeless looking youngsters who paraded before him. This was evident from the benignity of his eyes whose shrewd and humorous glances expressed goodwill to all, and good hope to none. A few displayed gold and silver medals on their jackets. One was holding a silver cup in each hand.

Jestfully addressing the medallists as " Ring Masters" the D I G. said " You are welcome".

Turning to the boy holding the silver cups, he quipped:

"Are you presenting me these attractive pieces to drink champaigne?"

The victims of these good-natured japes were bemused, and others amused. The humorous confabulations that prefaced the interviews, brought into play a pleasant atmosphere of relaxation and aplomb.

Most of the posers veered round our score boards in the areas of study and arenas of sports.

I was the last to be questioned. All others had left. The D.I.G. gave me a searching glance. I had an eerie feeling that my weak physique was under appraisal with tragic exactitude. My academic days with particular accent on my poor extra -curricular activities were brought into sharp focus. Dipping into the entries which highlighted the honorary services rendered to the government and the public by my late father, the D.I.G. read them aloud. They were :-

1. During World War I (1914 to 1918) moulded Indian Public opinion in favour of Britain through the media of the Press and platform.
2. Served as a Special honorary First Class Magistrate in Madurai city for over a decade.
3. Functioned as an active member on the Advisory Boards of several Public Welfare bodies.

4. Held instructional classes for convicts in the Madurai jail on the codes of human ethics and good citizenship for about fifteen years.

Leafing through the documents that attested the above entries, the D.I.G. observed :

"Your father had a profusion of merits, whereas you are at the other end of the scale"

"O K. "he said, but I stood still. Looking straight at me, he flung his left arm towards the exit door. I realised only then, that he had sentenced me to get out I carried out the sentence promptly. Stepping out of the building, I plunged into a troubled frame of mind.

I was convinced that my lack of merit was a sharp siren that sounded my blunt luck.

"Then what about the merits of my father ?" I asked myself. The instant reply that flashed aross my mind was "No".

The problem "What to do next ?" agitated my anguished mind. The days that followed were depressing. Very often I dreamt about my future that appeared wholly woolly. I was ina state of whirl-about.

The evening of September 30, was blustery. To prevent the ingress of dust-laden winds, the windows of my house remained closed. So was the door overlooking the forecourt. I sat in the drawing room with my nose buried in a propped up magazine. There was a tap at the door. When I responded, a Police constable in uniform stood right before me "After a smart salute, he delivered a letter superscribed. On His Majesty's Service only".

" Whaf is this? " I asked eagerly.

"Happy news "he said and disappeared.

My joy was unbounded. I tore open the envelope in a flash. Within was a typed appointment order, reproduced below:-

Office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Southern Range, Madurai .Dated 29-9-3

ORDER

Mr. George Phillips has been selected for appointment as a Sub-Inspector of Police and is placed in the Reserve list

Should a vacancy occur within the first three months of the opening of the session at the Police Training School, at Vellore, he will be called in, for training.

Sd/N. R A M A N U J A M

To Dy. Inspr. Genl. of Police,
Mr. George Phillips.

I read through the order repeatedly. Its contents generated a job of pessimism with a thin veneer of hope.

"If a vacancy did not occur within the stipulated time, what would be my fortuity? Could I cash in on the order next year? Or would the department reject my claim as a time-barred cheque? I revolved these in my mind.

I could not find answers to the moot questions. Even the office of the D.I.G. failed to instruct or interpret. Their ignorance was supreme. Only one thing appeared clear. If someone was disqualified during the first quarter of the training course and ordered out, I would be ordered in. My good luck was interlinked with another's bad luck. To hope to be benefited by such a sad luck was deucedly distressing. It was like trying to fish in troubled waters. However nothing happened for three months.

Being at a loose end, I passed my days in congenial inertia, drinking deeply, the happiness of laziness. A friend suggested callisthenics to improve my health and appearance. I underwent a guided course The results were beyond expectation.

Early in September 1937, I suffered an attack of hepatic torpor; the first fruits of the disease were luckless lapses of my bodily bloom, and vigour which I had painfully cultivated over a protracted period. I was perturbed. The doctor who vouched my recovery, fed me with all hope, and no medicine. To my great joy, ere long, pacing briskly, I reclaimed my health. My lost energy returned with my enthusiasm closely treading on its heels.

Chapter 5

The Fulfilment of a dream

The curtain dropped on my uneasy suspense on September 30, 1937. Larly that morning, a messenger, welcome as Noah's dove, brought the official orders, directing me to report to the Principal, Police Training School at Vellore, on the 16th proximo. This provided a wreath of joy around me ending a long lesson in patience, rife witn consistent hopes, in the background of confusing fears. The emergence of my career as a Policeman came within diaphanous vision, enabling me to enjoy a bright sunshine of my mind. Undoubtedly the offer of an opening in life, was a bounty granted to me for the merit of my deceased father.

In the course of my hectic preparations, to embark on my long awaited career, I had to cruise through waters of bitterness. I scrapped what all I could, to raise money for train fare, personal outfit, cost of uniform and other exigencies. For this end, a couple of gold jewels had to be retrieved from the family hope-chest, with no hope of their return to that repository.

On the red letter day, I reported as directed, when my lambent dream became a fait accompli. The training school was situated within the Vellore Fort.

The trainees numbered fifty seven. A break up of the various regions and the strength contributed by each of them are below:

Sl.No.	Range	Headquarters	Strength
1	Northern	Waltair now in Andhra Pradesh	4
2	Central	Vellore	8
3	Western	Coimbatore	10
4	Southern	Madurai	26
5	Madras City	Madras	4
6	Civil & Military Station.	Bangalore	3
7	Coorg	Mercara	2

Note: Nos. 6 & 7 were outside Madras Presidency

W. Ramachander Rao, one of the trainees from the Northern Range, was an ardent Nationalist, who had courted imprisonment during the Civil Disobedience Movement against the British Rule, in 1931. The Congress Government of Madras in 1937 headed by the late Shri. Rajagopalachari, nominated Mr. Rao as a Sub-Inspector of Police relaxing the age limit and other conditions.

In his opening address, the Principal, Mr. H.G. Furness reminded that the soft years with our fond parents were over and warned us to get ready to meet the challenges of hard years ahead. He hoped, we would comport ourselves with dignity in a manly manner, in our official and private lives and never behave like brawling brats. He accented that the place to which we had come could never tolerate lotus-eaters or wool gatherers, but honour the honest workers. Driving home the need to live within our means, he sounded a note of warning against purchasing catch-penny goods sold in the city.

A few sub-inspectors of the preceding batch, awaiting their orders of posting, gave a comprehensive account of the tasks before us. The unrelenting time table of work, we were told, would make

arduous demands on our physical stamina and mental machine. We were adjured to be prepared for the worst and accept every turn of the screw sub silentio, as an inevitable dispensation against which we could neither represent nor rebel. We gathered that a put up-and-shut up attitude, was the best, under the conditions that obtained in the school.

The epoch-making initial day was an amorphous mixture of non-stop performance of jumping, running, clearing hurdles and pits, as well as physical exercises. There appeared to be no set programme for the day. After forty five minutes of display and deliberate depletion of our bodily vigour, we were allowed a breather for ten minutes, during which the plumpy boys laid themselves flat on the ground due to extreme fatigue.

When whistles were blasted for a second helping of the terrible treat, those prostrated who did not get the second wind, could not lift their limbs. They had to be rolled like carpets, propped up perpendicularly and pushed forward on their unwilling feet by others. The principal who viewed both the helpers and the helped, with disfavour and disdain made no secret of his feelings. Thereafter followed a slightly shorter spell of live-wire activity, at the end of which the dismal day concluded. Our first taste of the pill of training was utterly bitterly. It was a defeating and deflating experience. Writhing with pain, due to taut nerves and twisted muscles, with every fibre in our body intolerably strained, everyone panted through nose and mouth opened up to capacity.

Our Assistant Drill Instructor who put us through the mill was in his fifties. The experience and expertise he had gathered over the years made him professionally wise, but his knowledge of English was painfully otherwise. This became manifest when at the end of our first ever parade he administered a curt monition as under;

"Attention" he yelled, and we clicked our heels.

He than trumpeted:

"Bath rooms, bath only; Urine passing, no bath room... ... latrine only. Bath room passing urine, principal get punished. One more thing. After eating eggs laid by cooks before morning parade, don't throw blank eggs on ground. Throw them on cooks; they keep clean place"

With these unsolicited and unwelcome pieces of warning, he ordered us to break off. He had raised his voice to such a dizzy pitch, that we thought he was blowing his top out. A feeling of helpless grief gripped us.

"What are we? ...Should we be told about these elementary rules of sanitation and cleanliness? and that too, so humiliatingly? "... We asked ourselves. Cowed down and crest-fallen we strode past him, when he fulminated astart;

"Go latrine.....Go latrine"

We were embarrassed by the fragmented chain of fractured English and harassed by the undignified commands. Worn out physically and wearied mentally, we drew in our horns and vanished.

The warnings of the A.D I. presupposed that we were an unfortunate bunch of callow youths with no experience whatsoever in public institutions, and if at all we had any, that should have been either in a calaboose or poor Home.

Our proemial days were atypical. About everyone, there-was an air of remoteness and withdrawal. It was a new place, with new people and new environs. The new way of life appeared to burn on mechanically Happily, the newness began to pall. After a few days, we became accustomed to our part and plight. Our fright was gone and everything seemed right. Friendliness and fraternity came to stay.

Chapter 6

Outdoor Routine

We were ushered through the following

1 Arms drill, 2 Squad drill

3 Lattie drill,* 4 Mob dispersal

5 Bayonet fighting, 6 Physical training,

7 Sports. 8 Games, 9 Boxing

10 Horse - Riding.

Physical training exercises, Sports, Games, boxing and horse-riding were the prerogatives of evenings. Special batches had their riding classes in the mornings Clearing hurdles, pits and scaling walls were practised thrice a week either in the mornings or evenings.

While every inch of our programme forced us to negotiate several hairpin bends a day, horse-riding and boxing were vulnerable to physical injuries. Mr. Furness was invariably associated with the coaching of these. It was therefore easy for him to identify and isolate the timorous and trepidant boys. Those who faltered in foot work in boxing or failed to throw their body or shoulder weight into their punches or did not block or bob the opponents

* Lattie is a Policeman's truncheon.

blows, were challenged by the Principal who activated them to an exchange of terrifying slugfests till they shed their fears and tears, sweat and blood.

HORSE - RIDING

Riders of the day had to fall in a straight line about forty yards away from the Riding school, inside which the horses were stationed. By and large, these animals were skittish and a few refractory ones, never hesitated to throw off those, who failed to control them. On a given signal, the riders had to race and secure their mounts. It was the misfortune of the boys with a bulk and girth, forbidding to the British taste, to trot behind their thin built colleagues who sprinted with all their might, and took over the animals that behaved. Breathless and luckless, the roly-poly boys reached their mutinous horses which gave them hostile receptions. From those which tried either to bite or kick, the fatty fraternity had their pick. When the order to mount was given the overweights fumbled. Unable to lift their bodies countering the more forceful pull of gravitation, everyone of them chanted "Oh God help me". "Save me merciful God". Their sad plight and pathetic sight were enough to move the hardest of hearts, but not that of Mr. Furness. He kept on shouting angrily:

"Try again, you miserable creatures. You are not dead". The 'earful prayers of the boys in agony were answered by the Gods around. The Riding Master and his syces, crouching on the ground to avoid the Principal's eyes, pushed up the visibly broken boys to their saddles. Everyone in this unfortunate category, during each riding lesson, repeatedly realised that he and his horse, were not made for each other.

Equitation exercised such an incantory sway over Mr. Furness, that he did not spare even his eight year old son, Humphrey. For the child, a donkey, a pony and a horse were provided in stages to practise, without reins, saddles and stirrups. The terrified boy had to keep a perilous balance, by throwing his arms around the necks of the animals. His shrieks and cries during risky exercises were silenced by his loving parent with threats to use his horse whip. Within a few months, Humphrey became an expert horseman, to the great joy of his father.

Work on the parade ground was exacting. Mr. Furness regularly inspected the butt and barrel of everyone's musket. He was meticulous about fine polish on our boots, belts, scabbards frogs, ammunition pouches and musket slings. The metallic parts of all equipments had to display fine shining. No outside help was permitted, and we had to do all the polishing ourselves. This was roughly an hour's labour a day. A perfect shave was compulsory and in cases of doubt, the Principal ran his fingers around our cheeks.

The tempo of the parade was kept high under the puissant eyes of the Principal, who rode around on his horse. Perceiving even a trifling error at a distance, he galloped towards the squad holding aloft his niding rod, with the brown tassel of which he indicated the defaulter, and ordered extra drill as punishment. There were monthly full-dress ceremonial parades, when we marched to the boom-boom - boom and ta - ra - ra of the school band. The music was exhilarating and we enjoyed the marching despite the strain involved.

Cross country races and climbing steep hills within a rigid compass of time, were periodical features which introduced a welcome competitive

spirit. On most occasions the Principal watched our progress and performance from places unseen by anybody. At a moment that was right and reasonable he appeared like a flash of lightning followed by an instant thunder of his wrath on the tail-enders for their poor show, spurring them to fare better. The tail-enders tales of woe never ended but triggered several rounds of unending ones.

Punitive drill was carried out in the hot sun during lunch intervals from 13.00 hrs. to 14.00 hrs. With the forenoon session of class work closing at 12.45 hrs, every boy who had a rod in pickle, had to double up to the hostel, don his uniform, rush to the armoury, take charge of his musket and report to the A.D I. at the parade ground at 13.00 hrs. This was too long a time-table of tasks to be accomplished within too short a period of fifteen minutes. In this welter of hurry and worry many chose to dine with duke Humphrey, while a few raced to the mess and gobbled their meal, like passengers at Rail road food-counters, with hardly five minutes between trains. However there was a silver lining in the dark cloud. Every type of our physical exertion had a precise time dimension. The objectives to be achieved were pitted against a time stream, which ran into a time horizon. Being vincible, and vulnerable we were like apples, that loved the mouths, that bit them.

We had target-practice lessons with muskets and revolvers. We were such talented marksmen that Mr. Briggs, our Chief Drill Instructor. dispraised us obliquely many a time, saying :

"When you chaps shoot, the safest place is the target" Our aims were so erratic that the bullets flew all over the place, and hit everything, except the target. Scoring a bulls-eye even by a chance remained a pipe-dream for many till the end.

During December, our Principal devised a neoteric method to educate and exercise us to avoid injuries if thrown off from horses. A sliding plank 10 × 4 feet was mounted on the edge of a wooden platform about 8 feet high. The slope of the said plank was about forty-five degrees, and its lower edge was over a pit about five feet below, filled with sand. Lying on our stomachs on the inclined surface we headed down the plank one by one. While falling we had to make an effort as instructed to break the fall and land on all fours. The bonafides of our Principal's objectives were unquestionable. He achieved them with the sincerity of a tiger's leap.

Initially he demonstrated the exercise by sliding down. Before he did so, he said ;

> " I shall not ask anyone to do anything which I fear to do "

He then administered this practical lesson to all Drill Instructors. Only Mr. Briggs, who was in his late thirties, escaped unhurt; all other instructors sustained abrasions. Many boys who suffered fractures and bleeding wounds were hospitalised. The principal frequently visited those under treatment with gifts of fruits and sweets. These visits and gestures boosted the sagging morale of the injured on the threshhold of their long future. The innate kindness and goodness of Mr. Funness required an occasion to bring about their revelation.

Every Saturday morning accompanied by the teaching staff, the Principal inspected our rooms, when the Instructors apprised him about the application and achievements of each trainee in studies and drill. Those reported deficient were adjured to put in more elbow-grease or face dismissal.

The Principl's favourite game was cricket. He assembled a fine team of players from among the trainees and personally coached them. Matches in which many local teams participated were conducted on Sundays which were not sabbath days for him. His religion was a sound, work-everyday - morality, delicious and nourishing as the food one earned with toil and ate. Messrs. S.A.Venkataraman I.C.S., the District Collector, S.W.W.Wright, the Superintendent of Police and S.Roy, I.F.S., District Forest Officer with their wives witnessed the matches. Lt. Col.G.S.Gill, O.B.E., I.M.S , Superintendent of the local Central Jail and a good cricketeer was a constant fixture in our school team. Among the trainees, H.G.Gabriel was an outstanding player in all departments of the Game.

Chapter 7

Class work

Instructional classes were held on the following subjects :-

1. Police Standing Orders.
2. Indian Penal Code.
3. Criminal Procedure Code.
4. Indian Evidence Act.
5. Special and Local Laws.
6. Medical Jurisprudence.
7. First Aid.
8. Foot and Finger Prints.
9. Observation and Memory.
10. Survey, measurement and Map drawing.

Mr. Furness evinced keen interest in our studies as well. He believed that the faculties of the mind, must be exercised like other members of the human body, to cultivate superiority in skill, enterprise, sobriety and discipline. Frequently and fervently he exhorted the instructors and trainees to share his belief. He visited our classes, atleast once a day. His explicit orders that we should ignore him, on these visits were implicitly obeyed. This was with a view to cut out distraction during a spell of concentration. Usually, he sat on the edge of the instructer's dais and flashed his

eyes around, like a rotating search light in a prisoner-of-war camp. If he spotted anyone in somnolence or brownstudy he sprang to his feet ond cornered the culprit in the castle of indolence with questions. If he failed to answer, extra drill and extra classes were orderd on an extraordinary scale. Mr. Furness was immensely irked if anyone looked at him even casually. All had to rivet their eyes on the instructor or the black-board as the need of the moment warranted.

The instructors were widely experienced and profoundly versed in professional skills. They taught us with such competence, as they could summon to the task. Our audition, vision and attention were maintained at a level that was sufficient to ensure optimum benefit. One of the instructors dealing with a minor subject had his classes scheduled in the afternoons. He cut and tailored his lectures carefully, so that we were not driven to questions, he could not answer. The manner in which he vetoed our questions was questionable, though he asserted that in this regard he was not answerable. He held that questioning was his privilege and answering our duty.

Usulally, he was vague, mysterious and cloudy. whenever he turned pragmatic and precise, the charm was gone. He believed that by teaching less, we would learn more. He was right. We searched and researched the subject from every possible angle and mastered it. We were grateful to him for having shown us the way to conquer the ecstasy of learning, by defeating the agony involved. Years later, another instructor of the same institution acquired a reputation for dealing with questions, with questions. When someone dared to know why he did so, his reply was, "why not?".

After a month, the teaching staff prepared a list of boys whose intelligence quotient fell short of the

minimum. The listed ones became the touchstone of understanding and assessment for the whole class. If these hapless bodies solved problems posed, it was safely presumed that everyone had absorbed and assimilated what had been put across in the class room.

Under the Principal's orders, those found wanting in studies were admitted to the I C.U. (Intensive-Care Unit) which functioned on all working days from 18.45. to 19.45 hrs. Personal attention was the keynote of the unit. The imaginaiion and qrasp of those under care were stimulated and sustained, by tapping their hidden resources and bringing out the best in them.

Consistent with the pace and progress of our acquisition of professional skill, Mr. Furness conceived, planned and directed "Mock murders", "Mock investigations" and "Mock trials", with the active participation of smart police officers who worked under him in different capacities. We enjoyed the stimulating experience of the simulated scenes which were shrewdly crafted. The stories enacted were remarkable for their clarity, motivation, sequence, logic and common sense. Correct professional techniques were brought into sharp focus with edifying confirmation of the knowledge we had acquired intramurally.

I cannot forget an unfortunate day of agonising suspense and abject gloom in our class room. Our Principal turned violent on one of our colléagues. who was warned during a routine class test not to steal glances at the answers of his desk-mate. When the offender attempted the forbidden act despite the warning. Mr Furness was so much galled, that he lambasted him severely. We regretted that the disconsolate penalty alarmingly outweighed the flash in the pan. Those who knew our Principal best, predicated that the worst did not

happen. They swore that the youngster would have been stripped of his job and thrown out like a potato peel but for the on-the-spot requital which spared his bread and butter. The battle for existence those days was so keen and vocational opportunities so lean, that most of us would have clung to our jobs, not only with our hands and feet, but also with our teeth, despite worst odds, even.

Stories with a ring of truth were current then, about a Superintendent of Police who treated his erring staff with doses of his muscularity. His hands would descend on the delinquent with a force and fury balancing the error involved. After the dramatic drubbing, the unfortunate soul was allowed unrecorded leave, sufficient for his recovery from the dolorous discomfitures of body and spirit. The anxiety of the subordinates to stick to their jobs like remora, (thanks to the multitude of dependents they had to feed and clothe) were the pincushions that absorbed all painful pricks. During the period of convalescence of the poor humans, all unpleasant evidence of their unbecoming errors disappeared and in their place was born, solid proof of their upright conduct in the unerring exercise of their duties. Commendations and monetary rewards for all such good work reached them in a long stream. These deliberate benefits placated even the implacable.

Another incident much talked about those days, related to a trusted Sub-inspector of the same S.P., whose name he misused to amass a fortune. As this cool treachery reached the ears of the S.P., he summoned the Judas to the farthest out-post in the district. When the former convulsing with rage raised his hand to give a good beating, the latter trembling with fear gave the floor a good wetting, and sobbed into his handkerchief, that he did not know the location of the toilet,

Chapter 8

Sidelights on our Hostel life

We were billeted in single unfurnished barrack type rooms as dark as the hold of a ship. There was no electricity and no dearth of mosquitoes. Privies lacked privacy. There was only one bath room with a cyclopean cement tank about four feet in height from which we had to bale water and tip it over our heads with mugs or buckets. Since early bathers rendered the whole water soapy, late arrivals needed no soap.

Adjacent to our hostel was our mess run on a no-profit and no-loss, basis.

Our daily menu was as below :-

06.00 hrs (only on parade days)	—	A cup of milk and a raw egg - vegetarians had two cups of milk.
08. 45 hrs.	—	Breakfast-puris or chapattis (popular wheat dishes) with mashed potato and tea.
12. 45 hrs.	—	Lunch - Rice, dhall curry, meat, a dish of mixed vegetables pepper water, pappad, buttermilk and pickles.
16. 45 hrs.	—	Plain tea.

20. 00 hrs. — Dinner. The bill of fare for lunch was faithfully rehearsed.

The quality of food remained at a steady level. Our monthly contribution was around Rs.12/- During training our monthly pay was Rs. 35/- Using the yardsticks they had grown up with, the boys from privileged families considered their pay packet as a small bit of lean meat and the job a low rung on a tall ladder.

Within the hostel complex was a canteen run by a private entrepreneur. Here, in addition to tea and snacks cigarettes, soft drinks, stationery and toilet articles were sold on credit, which many of us never possessed.

To match the new found dignity of the profession, some boys overreached themselves. On instalments they purchased garish garments of a design and description quite out of keeping with our salary and status. As they were ever out at their elbows, their promises of payment were like piecrusts, made only to be broken. Their credit crumbled and the creditors hotly pursued them. Many took to moolinght flitting and a few deliberately played hide-and-seek, which the uncommitted watched, with their hearts leaping with joy.

We had a limited freedom of movement. A brief visit to the city for a couple of hours in the evenings was permitted. After a day's gruelling work, many did not have the pep to undertake an outing. Even if someone had it, he was out of pocket. There was a roll call at our barracks at 21. 00 hrs when every one had to be present. This strict pattern of discipline aimed at keeping all the trainees in and all others out before the zero hour. Lights in our rooms after 22 00 hrs were banned. For those who seldom chose to go out into the city, the boundaries of their

small world were the walls of the Vellore Fort. What happened outside came to them as faint and implausible echoes.

For our tenements we provided a guard round the clock with a rotating complement of one commander and four sentries. The spell of each sentry-go was equavalent to the duration of a dog-watch. Surprise checks of the guards were concentrated during the small hours of the mornings. Sentries on duty found inalert or sleeping, were hauled over the coals.

There was some free time, when we were free from duty but this prized possession had to be devoted to uncompleted individual tasks and unfulfilled group assignments, which were the offshoots of our class-work. Leisure which is enjoyable was never enjoyed due to its total absence. Leisure is a state of being, where activity is performed for its own sake. It develops one as a human and not as a professional. It provides the needed scope and opportunity to pursue one's inspiration or inclination, yielding real happiness to the pursuer, all along the path of pursuit and in the achievement of the goal. Pedagogues in many countries believe that if one cultivates the right type of occupation during leisure in the back gound of absolute freedom and free will, he moulds himself into a pleasant personality.

Chapter 9

The Christmas Vacation.

Towards the fall of 1937, in the wake of a written test and before our school recessed for Christmas, a festive celebration was arranged on the last working day. Monologues and short dramas were staged by talented trainees. Two awards were announced one for the best and the other for the worst performance.

Noteworthy was the role of V. Subramanian, who died in harness as a Deputy Superintendent of Police in 1965. He inaugrated the stage shows with a scrupulous mimicry of our Principal, both on the Parade ground and in our class room. He mimicked his comportment, gait, voice, habits, manners and above all the fearful pattern of his ordering punishments from horse-back.

In a few snatches of dialogues that were witty and gritty, Subramanian displayed his talents. His masterpiece was a tearful tragedy, in which he carried the ball as the virtuous victim. This was a spell-binding performance which seized upon its spectators and auditors with mesmeric possession with an elegant blandishment of theatrical enchantment. He got the top billing for his histrionic genius. Had his preference been for the stage, or screen, he would have undoubtedly drawn long lines to the box office. He was awarded the first prize of a complete set of Shakespeare's plays.

Being backward in parade, I was chosen to command an awkward squad consisting of boys blessed with nature's thankless gifts of uncouth frames and ungainly movements. We appeared on the stage bleary eyed, with unshaven faces, creaseless uniforms and unpolished footwears. One wore a boot on one leg and a shoe on the other. Another had exchanged his right and left shoes. When the squad marched, everyone was out of step and dressing. Those who had grown fleshy at wrong places waddled like ducks, while others ran like rabbits. That the onlookers enjoyed our show was evident from the uproarious waves of laughter that shook the auditorium. In sharp contrast to this was their reaction to our demonstration in mob firing. We declared the assembly of our spectators unlaw ful, and warned them to disperse,on pain of being fired upon. Our words were met with jeers. When we loaded our firearms and pointed our weapons towards the joyous lot, a sudden sense of disquietude gripped them. The non-existent danger we posed became so commanding,that many jumped to their feet and started to move out. From peaks of happiness they suddenly fell into depths of fear and panic. An amused Mr. Furness, allayed their fears promptly with a smile and wave of his hand. We continued our manoeuvres till we were drummed out of the stage to the great relief of everybody. Outdoing-all standards of awkwardness we were at our best to stage the worst possible show. On behalf of my squad, I received the prize of a convex mirror reflecting ludicrous images labelled "As others see you".

Mr. Furness also played his part, singing songs about the trainees and their training. The late Miss Ida Scudder, Founder and Principal of the Christian Mission Medical College and Hospital at vellore, and a few others joined the chorus. The acclaim, the choir received was both vociferous and heartfelt.

Chapter 10

The Inspector-General's Visit

Our school reopened on January 3, 1938. The new year was only a few days old, when Sir Frederick Sayers, the I.G. of Police paid us a visit. He was of medium height and build. His features and looks expressed strength tempered with justice, for which he was well known.

When the distinguished Chief stepped into our class room followed closely by Mr. Furness, none took notice of the rare visitor. We were glued to our seats more than ever before, and our instructor continued to talk without a break. Annoyed at this show of irreverence, the I.G. in a sharp tone interjected:

"What kind of discipline is this?"

To see our Principal match his wits against this infelicitous turn, with felicitous words, was an experience rich enough to be learnt and treasured in our minds. Cool and composed he talked slowly, but quite audibly and clearly:

"The trainees have been pinned down", he said, "by my standing instructions to ignore visitors to eliminate distraction during learning. I am at fault for not having made them wise to an occasion like this. I am indeed sorry", he concluded.

The I.G's feelings appeared unappeased. He shrugged his shoulders hinting disagreement. Nevertheless, the incident served to bring into bold relief a vivid picture of the intrinsic good nature of Mr. Furness. He never chose the easy path of blaming our instructor or us for not upholding, the most fundamental norm of discipline, which needed no telling. He readily accepted responsibility for our lapse, and bore the cross.

The monocled Sir Frederick enquired about the subject of the lecture in progress. When told, it was The Indian Evidence-Act, he posed the following question:

"What do you understand by the term presumption of law?"

He then looked around the class-room, obviously to net a lubberly lout, quite unlikely to rise to the occasion. When his piercing look scanned the row of desks behind one of which I was seated, on a sudden involuntary impulse, my eyes dropped. For the astute chief my odd behaviour was a crystalline signature which helped to identify his victim. In a split second, pointing his index finger towards me, he called out

"You, answer"

For me it was a bolt from the blue both for its suddenness, and the shock it transmitted. I pulled myself together, sooner than I was capable of and sprang to my feet, when my voice cut through the background of uneasy silence in the room. Though soft and slow incipiently my semantics quickly winged to happy heights of volume and volubility. I had studied this topic fully assiduously, the previous night. Hence my diction was scintillating. The I.G. ordered me to be seated, when my locution ended.

Singling out Vasudeva Mallaya, another trainee, who sported an old type of World War I moustache, the I.G. asked him to elucidate the term "Presumption of Fact". With his perfervid and roundly response, Mallaya outperformed me in style and substance, demeanour and delivery.

Visibly pleased, the I.G. flashed a smile of satisfaction and left. The whole lot of us heaved to our feet pullulating with joy.

The I.G's inspection notes mirrored his impressions. He agreed with the credo of our school and set his seal of approval on the courses conducted and subjects taught. He appreciated the sincerity and zeal of the Principal and his lieutenants to achieve the targets. He had no doubt that the best brains had been assembled on the teaching staff to instruct and inspire the trainees to accomplish the difficult tasks awaiting them.

In the afternoon, there was a friendly Cricket match between our school team captained by Mr. Furness and the I.G's team composed mostly of teenaged students from Madras. The I.G. mixed freely with his players who addressed him quite informally as "Fred" without any inhibition. Everybody who was anybody around was impressed with the dazzling heights to which camaraderie in healthy sports could rocket.

Chapter 11

I stoop to conquer

In due course, practical tests in drill came to occupy the pride of place on the agenda of our outdoor routine. We were ordered to memorise more than a hundred pages in the old Madras Police Drill and Training Manual. This was an uphill task, but there was no escape from it. The tests consisted of textual narration on each movement in every type of drill word for word, followed up by a correct demonstration. A poor memory landed one in a funny fiasco.

With a tight schedule day after day from sun up to sun down, the only time we could isolate to coax or coerce our memory was the night. Lights in our rooms after 22.00 hours were banned. Those who violated this rule were punished. Mr. Furness had set objectives for our daily rising and retiring; to endure hard work by day and enjoy hard earned rest by night. Therefore, he tolerated no nonsense of anyone keeping awake after the dead-line.

We checkmated this handicap by sealing the doors and windows of our rooms with tightly drawn, thick dark curtains. Naturally, within minutes, the air inside became stuffy and our bodies were covered with blankets of sweat. There was nothing

we could do about this legacy of destiny. Our fortitude and forbearance were the only answers. We knew that Mr. Briggs (Our Chief Drill Instructor) knew that we violated the principal's ban on lights in our rooms. We also knew, that he knew, that we knew, that he knew about the violation.

Kneeling on the floor besides carefully shaded kerosene lamps we went allout to muster the needed will to master the texts,driving ourselves into the small hours of the mornings.

Arms drill was the most ticklish card to play. Standing to attention, without the least vibration of the body save the hands, all movements had to be executed cutely, with precision. Despite one's sedulity,an unbudged carriage of the head throughout the exercise was hard to achieve. To assess the steadiness of our heads, Mr. Furness took it into his head to devise a new technique that was a novelty in difficulty. He ordered match boxes to be kept on our hats before the tests. If these small objects maintained their status quo till the end, tests ended successfully.

I was the worst sufferer. With a very weak constitution,I underwent untold suffering to handle a musket. My memory I could ever trust but the match box never. It was too eager to obey the law of gravitation even at the shadow of a jerk. I failed four times in the tests. Mr. Briggs, the examiner became as much disgusted with me as I had with the tests.

During my fifth attempt, I appeared before Mr. Briggs. On seeing me he crumpled up his nose in utter disgust. In a dry ironical tone of a father, dealing with a hopeless child, he said that he would give me pass marks, as he was thoroughly fed up with me. Silently, I rejoiced at the dawn of good

luck, though in an unhappy horizon. I placed my match box on my hat and stood to attention. I was ordered to slope arm. In this drill there are three movements from the attention position:

1. Throwing up the musket close to the right side of the body, catching it with the left arm resting horizontally on the stomach with palm inwards, the right arm fully extended and gently holding the butt.
2. carrying the musket across to the left shoulder
3. cutting away the right hand smartly.

After the correct textual narration, I executed the first and second movements flawlessly During the third, while cutting away my right hand, I hit my chin and the match box came rolling down. Almost simultaneously, there was a shrill cry" Good bye match box".

The vociferator was Mr. Furness. Being ever alert, he had sent out his optical antennae to detect what was going on around, concealing himself carefully behind a dense thicket of bushes.

I was painfully shocked. Instantly allowing a look of absolute disgust to come over his face, Mr. Briggs shouted :

"Fiddle sticks...Fall out and report after three days "

Hardly had the echoes of these angry words died, when Mr. Furness arrived on the scene riding his spanking steed. With a quizzical glance, he made an woeful face at me. Looking at Mr. Briggs, he burst into a horse-laugh. Mr. Furness never detested those who failed in tests, but was harsh only to the boys whom he found lacking in the will to work. He wanted us to be archers, firing endless arrows of endeavour, not for the sheer fun of doing so. but to match the high standards of professional skills, he had laboriously evolved.

I decided to stoop to a foul game, to conquer the test. In my state of helplessness, a foul method appeared fair, as I had fallen foul of fair ones, repeatedly.

On the day of my sixth attempt, I turned out spick and span. My belt, boots, etcetra bore extraordinary polish. I reported to Mr. Briggs at 0900 hrs. At his bidding I placed my match box on the top of my hat. He ordered me to slope arm. After repeating the text, I executed all movements correctly. The match box stayed where it was with a vengeance. A few more select items of drill were gone through with triumphant ascendancy. I was declared to have passed. My joy was unprecedented.

With great gusto I marched victoriously to the armoury to deposit my musket. In the vicinity of its entry, a few colleagues of mine crossed my path. One of them touched the top of my hat and seized the match box which came into his hands with a snap.

"Strange "he cried and on examining it found a thin layer of gum on its under surface.

"A cheat"... "A cheat", he exploded and jumped into the air, holding high the match box over his head. Immediately a crowd of boys gathered around and started pushing me hither and thither. I had forgotten to remove the match box from my hat. Regrettably, I had been unkind to the kind object that had aided and abetted my success in the test. I confessed the truth. Boisterous laughter filled the air. I silenced the mouths of those who threatened to blackmail me, with delicattessen.

Chapter 12

Mr. Furness proceeds on leave

Our principal was granted long leave from May 1, when our school recessed for summer holidays. In his honour we desired to host a farewell party but he put his foot down on the proposal.

However he met us informally, when he spoke emotionally. He viewed discipline to be a holy writ, which no sane power could mitigate or modify. He asserted that discipline and hard work existed cheek by jowl with their hands rolled into one. What he tried to create in us was endurance fitness, the capacity to do prolonged work under difficult conditions. This, he believed could be achieved only by breeding toughness, resilience and good humour into us. He was most sentimental, when he desired to be excused for the austere treatment he had meted out to us. Pointing to his mouth, he said, that his harsh words came from there and not from his heart, which he touched feelingly with his open palm. What he had done, he added, was only in the interests of the trainees and the training institution, whose high standards he had striven to maintain. When he spoke thus, his eyes filmed over and tears trickled down his cheeks. Most of us were moved visibly. We sincerely felt that if we had any power to grant him a quid pro quo for his pains for the cause of our training, everyone would have certainly voted with both his hands.

Mr. Furness was in his sunset years. This foreclosed the possibility of his heading the training school again. He combined in him two personalities,

the out and out official and the purely personal. These two facets of his nature were so disparate as to shock anyone into utter disbelief. He was indeed a baffling composite of shifting silhouettes of man. His harshness on duty and homeliness otherwise were rare patterns of human conduct. His iron discipline akin to that aboard a man-of-war at sea, stemmed from the rigid principles which he practised first, and preached next. He was a devotee of duty to the very depths of his soul, and he expected equal devotion from those whose welfare was his anxious care. His very presence was more than a performance. It stirred up one and all. We responded to his orders the way cavalry horses do, at the call of the trumpet. His administration was like sunlight. Nobody could increase or decrease its intensity. Everybody had to bask in it.

In his personal capacity, he cracked jokes, sang and danced with us, happily oblivious of his rank, status or age. On one accasion, he surprised us at dinner. He ate the way we ate, using his fingers. When a spoon and fork were brought to him, he sent us into roaing peals of laughter by lashing out:

" Who would like to make love through an interpreter ? " In his verbal pleasantries, wit and wisdom gleamed fitfully, usually. He was completely at home with the lack of formality he encountered during his unheralded visits to our hostel.

His company was remarkable for the enjoyment we derived. He was an inverted human ice berg. Every inch of his impressive personality was clearly open to view. The small invisible portion was his disciplined private life, controlled by a tidy mind. Memories of Mr. Furness and his training will be eagerly cherished by those who came under his wing, with fitting sentiment, all their lives.

Chapter 13

Mr Bailey

By mid June, our school reopened after the summer holidays. Our new Principal was Mr. G H.P. Bailey. His was a new era. He brought about several changes in the working of the institution. Some of the important ones were-

1. The sliding plank introduced by Mr.Furness to teach us to break falls from horses was the first to come under his close study. He tried this device personally. An expert rider though, he could hardly bring himself to appreciate the utility of this practical instruction, which he characterised as a practical joke. He abolished it forthwith. What was nonsuch to Mr. Furness, became nonsense to Mr. Bailey.

   All the trainees were tickled pink at the decision of the new Principal, who was hailed as a good samaritan. By bell, book and candle he had banished the hobgoblin of danger which filled our hearts and minds with terror and fear every day.The cheerless and longish plank became a cheerful and longing object, overnight. It was adzed out into a shining dinir.g table, which found its worthy place in our mess. That was a gala day for us, which we spent shouting and sporting,singing and dancing.

2. Cut out afternoon classes twice a week to supplement the hours of private study or rest.
3. Cancelled parades on Thursdays and Saturdays.
4. Broke the historical neck of our hostel menu by permitting coffee for our breakfast, fish for lunch and dinner and cookies, the classic complement of evening tea.
5. The ban on lights in our rooms after 22.00 hrs. was lifted.
6. Compulsory attendance of non-playing trainees at cricket matches was dispensed with.
7. Horse riding classes were limited to one a week and its duration was reduced to forty five minutes.

The restructuring of our work on the parade ground and in the class room made us a little easy but by no means lazy. The tempo of our output was sustained without any let-down of standards. Despite the concessions he granted, Mr. Bailey never permitted what he believed to be the majestic machine of training of which he was in charge, to slip out of his personal control. He desired that even minor alterations to our time- table should come up to him, before they were discussed, let alone settled. That he was committed to care for those committed to his care was incontrovertible. There was something unique about his innovations. They had the essence of permanence. Even time could not overturn them.

Innovation is a combination of creative, and imaginative talents for applying knowledge gathered from past experience, to existing ideas or new ones to evolve a novel pattern which produces a very useful and lasting effect.

In July during a riding exercise, I was unhorsed. My fall caused a suspected fracture on my right palm. A malfunctioning X ray apparatus at the local Goverment Hospital, located no fracture though the

pain and swelling on the affected part, showed no sign of abatement. Dr. F.A.B. Sheppard, District Medical Officer recommended myexamination at the Madras General Hospital.

When I proceeded to Madras, my colleague, Gabriel accompanied me. He had been advised a minor operation on his right knee, which he injured during a cricket game. At the hospital, he was mustered in as an in-patient, and his operation scheduled on the fourth day. I underwent a check up, which revealed a simple fracture. My palm was plastered. Before my return to Vellore, I called on Gabriel and spent a few minutes, with him. At parting we said au revoir hoping to meet again.

During the following week our Chief Law Instructor, Mr. B.Bhasker Rao walked into our class room one day and broke the sad news of the sudden demise of Gabriel. Death had occurred due to an over dose of anaesthesia. Sorrow and shadow descended on our school which was closed in the afternoon in honour of his memory. Besides being an outstanding cricketeer, Gabriel was a top sportsman. He was indeed the pepper and spice of our institution.

Even after the fracture had healed, I could hardly use my injured right hand as before. It became too slow and awkward to be employed often and was no more useful than my left hand. For quiet sometime, I had two left hands.

Chapter 14

The other face of the coin.

Our rigorous routine was not without its spells of lighter moments. Off and on, some of our colleagues whipped the cat with amusing scenes, bubbling over with mirth and laughter. A couple of such instances are below:-

1. On a holiday, I was having a post-lunch snooze in my room. When I answered a knock, a naked white figure chipped in, I thought I was dreaming. Only the whoops and hoops of the boys around brought me to my real self. Before I could realise the truth, the intruder had breezed out after a hasty handshake with me.

The Merry Andrew was one of our Anglo-Indian colleagues, who was honestly fulfilling the condition of a bet for a cup of tea. He had offered to go round the hostel stark naked, visit every room and shake hands with every inmate; if he failed, he had promised to eat his hat. It was some kind of wackiness that had prompted him to do what he did. He had neither the intention nor inclination to any kind of obscenity, in word or deed. Never appearing to be conscious of his nakedness even for a moment, he conducted himself like a well dressed gentleman of culture and

polish. After accomplishing the escapade he leisurely sipped his cup of tea in the canteen amidst a cheering crowd of boys, and slipped into his clothes.

2. Another hostel inmate, did not find his locked bicycle at the place, where he had left it. He was distressed. All the more so, as it was a brand new machine and a gift from his would be father-in law. This apart, he deemed with tears that the loss foreboded evil. On running feet he made enquiries with everyone in and around the hostel about the cycle. He searched in vain, all possible and impossible places where he thought his transport could be hidden. When he climbed on the hostel roof and looked around, his exploring eyes brought exploding laughter. Many who heard his outburst were puzzled. He shouted in a voice charged with excitement and joy that his cycle was atop a giant tree near by. Immediately, a few boys scrambled up the massive trunk and brought down the lost property. Its owner was so much overjoyed that he threw a lavish party to all. None knew the authors of the mischief. Till we left the training school, the incident remained shrouded in mystery. The cloak of secrecy was so tightly drawn over the entire affair, that it redounded to the credit of the mischief makers who covertly master-minded this overt act, without causing even shadows of doubt to fall on them either then or thereafter. By their kinetic impact, such free-wheeling pranks fragmented the continuity of our monotony with welcome oases of merriment that exuded Homeric laughter.

Chapter 15

Our last days at the police School

The final examinations were conducted during the ultimate week of September. Tests in drill were held by two Superintendents of Police from outstations. On this occasion Mr. Bailey moved about the parade ground with an erect and deliberate bearing, which only careful cultivation could bring forth. His uniform was neat, spruce and spotless. He appeared to have stepped out of the band box just then.

Competitions in Sports, games, drill and riding were held after the examinations. Prizes were awarded to the winners, at a function presided over by Sir Frederick Sayers, the I.G.of Police. The working prize for the best boy in studies was awarded to A.Subbarayan and the I.G's gold medal for overall proficiency to K.Maloji.

In his address, the I G. elucidated and exemplified our duties and responsibilities at length. He assured proper recognition for good work, and warned that those who defaulted by neglect would get what they deserved. He wanted everyone to remember that only hard work and honesty could ensure a place in the sun. All of us, he observed, were not only our mothers' hope, but also the hope

of the lawfully established government of the country and the people we had to serve. In conclusion, he said, "Though you may feel so little in yourselves, you must know,you are so great in others"

All the trainees received orders of permanent allotment to various districts for practical police duties, and subsequent postings. My friend K. Palanisamy and I were posted to Tuticorin Town Circle in Tirunelveli District. We felt it quite a wrench to say good bye to our instructors, and to so many good and affectionate fellows, I mean our colleagues.

We left Vellore on October, 14 at 18.00 hrs. As our train steamed out of the Railway Station, we were subdued by enthralling grief Our eyes mirrored inner emotions with tears. The thought that we were leaving our Alma Mater for good, pained us. That was the place, where we hammered day in and day out, underwent trouble and travail, shed tears and sweat, and a few their blood too, to prepare to compete in a competitive world. As time rolled on, darkness swept along the train windows. The cold wind that invaded us and spells of lightning that forked the distant clouds, followed by growls of thunder, had the effect of changing our minds and moods.

The next morning at 09.00 hrs, we reached Tuticorin. It was a pleasant surprise when two local constables (Numbers 159 Chelliah Naidu and 1026 Ayyalu Naidu) received us on the platform with welcome salutations. Hotel rooms had been booked for us by the S.H O. of Tuticorin Town. We moved into them with a feeling of satisfying happiness. The imaginative action in arranging for our reception and accomodation generated in us a profound sense of belonging to the family of the Police Force.

Chapter 16

Practical Duties

At 11.00 hrs. we called on the S. H. O. Mr. Haneef, and thanked him for having made arrangements for our reception and stay. An hour later, we reported to Inspector Raja Mohammed at his office. As was customary then, we donned ceremonial dress on entering upon our duties on the first day as Policemen. Our outfit consisted of breeches, ankle boots and tunics buttoned up as high as our chins permitted. We sported red silk turbans topped with gold zari about two inches in width.

The Inspector received us courteously. His briefing on our day to day duties for which a programme of work had been drawn up, was clear as noonday. Mr. Mohammed who appeared to have his heart in the right place, wished us good luck with a smile and promised help whenever needed. In the evening we called on Mr. E. S. Treasure, the Assistant Superintendent of Police.

Our work schedule consisted of performing the duties of :-

1. Constable.
2. Station writer.
3. Head Constable.
4. Guard Officer of tha local Sub-jail.

5. Traffic Regulation.
6. Inspector's writer.

Dnring our night rounds in Tuticorin Town early in November, Palanisamy and I chanced to skirt a country liquor shop at midnight. Through a half-open window, we saw a half-light. There were measuring jars and tumblers alongside a liquor cask on a table. It was clearly a case of after-hour sale, forbidden by law. When we called upon the vendor, to open the door and produce his licence, his reaction was singular Without a word, he puffed out the kerosene light within and clapped the window. It was a silent protest against our loud action. To our repeated calls, he turned a deaf ear. Realising that a physical getaway was impossible under the nose of two police officers, he beat a psychological retreat, into the darkness, he had created.

On return to the Police Station we recorded the incident in our diaries. Cut to the quick by the police action, the lessee of the shop petitioned to the District Superintendent of Police, Mr. F. L. Underwood. fabricating a vicious story. Naming both of us, he alleged that we had pounded on the door of his liquor shop at dead of night and ordered the vendor to part with free drinks. When he refused to oblige, we were alleged to have threatened him with physical harm, in addition to legal action.

On this petition, the S. P. endorsed :-

1. Inspector. Tuticorin will please investigate into the allegations and report through his A. S. P.
2. If the facts alleged are true
the twin police Officers should be departmentally dealt with.

The enquiries of the Inspector were on the Square. He, denuded the kernel of truth, by stripping away

its vesture of embellishments and exaggerations and sent his report as directed. The investigator's findings made out a clear case of after-hour sale. He described the petitioner's course of action as a camouflaged effort to save his vendor, and himself from penal visitation. The S. P. endorsed the Inspector's verdict in toto and ordered prosecution of the petitioner, under Sec. 47 of the Madras Police Act for his malafide cut and thrust to deter police officers from discharging their duties in good faith.

The lessee was chargesheeted before the local Second Class Magistrate who found him guilty and fined him Rupees fifty. The Excise authorities also imposed a penalty on the lessee and his vendor for the after-hour sale.

Both the Inspector and Sub Inspector took us along with them on investigation duties shedding a flood of light on blind alleys and dark corners in this important technique of Police work. They steered us along correct paths. Whatever was worthy of script, we minuted and resolved doubts and difficculties on the spot. We dined well on a varied fare of experience and edification in cases under different heads of crime like murder, robbery, dacoity, burglary and theft. Inspector Raja Mohammed was at times irritable and high-toned but reflection and resolution soon gained ascendency over his tantrums. Quickly he became his usual self. He was an excellent officer to work with, his small failings notwithstanding.

Simple murder cases are the easiest to handle. Usually all details of the crime, names of accused, witnessess and the motive for the offence are mentioned in the First Information Report itself. Burglaries by night are the most difficult to solve. Professionals who operate with experience and expertise are hard to identify. Only pains-

taking investigation, careful search and research, as well as unremitting vigilance help to detect these cases. The Intelligence Bureaux which function at the District headquarters provide information about likely professionals whose complicity could be examined. Scientific techniques in vogue then were limited to photographic aids, and lifting of finger and foot prints for comparison with those of suspects likely to have operated. The Chemical Examiner at Madras conducted analyses and tests of blood stains, poison, viscera etc. and issued reports of his examinations.

Murders for the purpose of thefts or robberies by hardened and itinerant professionals posed problems in a majority of cases. The old Criminal Tribes Act later christened as the Notified Tribes Act, kept wandering gangs and local criminals under police surveillance. The more dangerous among them were ordered to report at the Police Station concerned at 23 00 hrs and 03.00 hrs to deter them from their nightly depredations.

However experience showed that adept criminals could trot up to fifteen kilometres through cross country tracks after 23 00 hrs. with the insolent ease of a nocturnal panther, eluding the watchful eyes of policemen and deluding the wakeful public, commit crimes and report back at the Police Station at 03.00 hrs. Quite easily thus, and quietly too, the inveterate and intrepid lot, with their feet, defeated law's feet The only way to clip their wings was to make them sleep in the Police Station, during the whole night, when a couple of constables kept sleepless watch over their sleeping charges. This effective method of crime control at which law blinked and the hierarchy winked, was an apparently innocuous shenanigan of fool-proof efficacy.

Most people take to crime for understandable and universal reasons. They crave for a better, happier and satisfying life. The then Government of Madras, fully alive to this human problem launched pioneering efforts to wean these sinning humans away from their sins The first step towards this salutary effort, neutralised the unfourtunate peoples' objective shortages with subsidies and the second negatived their subjective shortcomings of which they were psychic victtms, with education, demonstration and propaganda. Full blooded Reclamation Work in chosen districts was undertaken under the supervision of senior Police Officers, in the early twenties. Career oriented professional skills were taught to those found suitable. Ventures in agriculture, poultry farming, apiary, easy handiwork and handicrafts founded and funded by the Government proselytized several criminals into useful citizens. Schools for the children of the settlers in Reclamation colonies became popular.

Chapter 17

An attempt on the Inspector's life

Sometime in January 1939, I accompanied Inspector Raja Mohammed on a routine visit to Vagaikulam Police Out-Post, in his circle. We reached the place around 10.00 hrs. As the Inspector was lounging on a sofa in the anterior lobby of the local Rest house, I hurried to the out-post with its H.C. to prepare statistics of cases under the local laws.

Within minutes, we heard someone straining his throat and lungs. As the Head constable and I came out, we saw a well built and round shouldered youth, with dark hair brushed back with careless neatness, advancing menacingly towards the Inspector, who had stepped out on the road. The veteran Police Officer, though palpably feeble in bodily strength due to his age, was not lacking in courage. He had rolled up his sleeves to meet the challenge. The H.C. promptly ordered the intimidator to withdraw on pain of immediate arrest. Blanched with rage, the hoodlum who appeared determined for a square brush with the Inspector, brushed aside the H.C's warnings and lunged forward. With the agility of a lizard after a fly, the H.C. pounced on the youth and pinned him on the ground. I helped the H.C. to keep a fast hold on the fallen man, who cuffed and kicked to regain his liberty. The manacles which the sentry constable of the out-post hurriedly brought could not be clamped on to the man's wrists, as they were too big. His hands

were therefore tied behind his back. On searching his person, we recovered a shining sheathed knife from his undergarments. But for the H.C's advertence and alertness, a frontal lethal attack on the Inspector would have been an unfortunate certainty.

The Head Constable (Ramakrishna Pillai) who was rewarded was an ex-army man. He enjoyed a reputation for giving proof, not promise of his courage. Whatever he did, he rounded with remarkable celerity.

The man we took into custody was a confirmed piccaroon. He had been booked in a series of cheating cases, mainly due to the untiring efforts of the Inspector. The culprit harboured feelings of bitter animosity towards the human motivating force behind his misfortunes. A congenital dupe with a creative type of treachery, the misguided youth conceived of original plans to put his duplicity through. Chicanery was his darling brain child. Often he ate his own words, as these obviously gave him a wholesome dinner. He was arrested under Section 151 Criminal Procedure Code and remanded to custody by the Magistrate.

After investigation, a charge sheet was filed against the bully under Sections 353 and 511 of the Indian Penal Code (attempt to assault a public servant on duty) In the wake of a short trial he was jailed. Subsequently all cases of cheating against this scourge of humanity, ended in conviction.

Our practical executive Police training concluded during the second week of March. This was the final stage in licking us into shape as Policemen. Herein was afforded an effective meeting ground for theory and practice which blended themselves into a happy amalgam of knowledge and guidance, crystallising several vague impressions into concrete ideas. Our acquisition was a wider vision and greater wisdom.

The next item on our programme was desk-attachment at the District Police Office. Defacto, this attachment was a period of detachment. Our work consisted of file study and processing of papers in various sections. We were left to our fate with bundles of files behind closed doors in a room, at the farthest end of the office corridor. Here time appeared to belong to us. With this precious possession we purchased indulgence. Those who saw movies late into the night, had a good opportunity they badly needed, for spells of sleep. Others read newspapers or enjoyed kicking the conversational ball of dreamy talk, like fish walking on land and men on water. The only contacts established with the bundles of papers, we had to digest, were by those who used them to prop up their heads while sleeping on the benches. This was a dark and unfortunate period in our professional apprenticeship. Our employers were never seen, heard or felt and we the employed were totally unemployed.

During the succeeding stage, we understudied Police Prosecutors. This work was quite lively. We perused case diaries and attended Courts. I was attached to a prosecuting sub-inspector of Police, whose retirement was proximate, He was considered to be a professional ace. Before the commencement of the trial in almost every case, he exchanged pleasantries with the complainant or anyone of his clan whose hands he eagerly gripped and warmly shook. During this visible show of courtesy and goodwill, an invisible roll of bank notes was passed on to the P S.I. who pocketed it, in a natural effort to retrieve his snuff box. He called himself honest, probably because he helped himself with the gains that flowed from the proponents of the prosecution and never from their opponents

Chapter 18

As an indepent Station House Officer

The ultimate in learning is, learning by doing, when the learner become his teacher. This view finds its roots in the old Chinese adage:

"If I hear it, I forget it;
If I see it, I remember it;
If I do it, I know it."

One learns and gains more by personal experience and efforts, than by external agencies. Sir Isaac Newton would not have discovered the law of gravitation, had he not been hit on his head by a fig.

At the training school, we listened to lectures. During practical training in the districts, we saw how professional skills we had learnt, were translated into action. As independent functionaries, we were poised to acquire first rate practical knowledge.

I was posted as Station House Officer of Tisayanvilai, about 60 kilometres S.E of Tirunelveli. The jurisdiction to be policed was extensive, with fifty mother villages, besides hamlets. I took over on May 3, 1939. After months of training, I stood on the threshold of a new experience which in anticipation was not without its uncertainties and hazards.

My predecessor was an officiating Sub-Inspector, who had to be reverted to the rank of a Head constable, due to want of a vacancy. He was ordered to work under me as a temporary measure. No situation could have been more embarrassing to either of us. The staff was more loyal to him than to me. I became uneasy and unhappy. Fortunately, after a few weeks he was posted out.

The jurisdiction of the local Police included an out-post at Vijayanarayanam, which became a full fledged Police Station in later years.

The permanent H.C. at my station was a senior policeman. He was a six footer and in bodily size, gargantuan. Though he looked very much like a Japanese wrestler, he wrestled only with his reluctant legs to coerce them to carry his weighty body. When we moved out, he dwarfed me so much that many commented that we were prototypes of the Biblical David and Goliath. When we talked, I had to look up, and he, look down; but never did he look down on me. His leviathan body exaggerated his strength, while my skeletal and spindle shaped frame exposed my weakness.

Itineration facilities in the area were poor. Barring a few villages on the main motorable road, a vast majority of the inner recesses were accessible only by foot, bullock cart, or on horse back. The tracks were interspersed with rocky bluffs. The farthest village was at a distance of twenty six kilometres. In some sandy areas a pedestrian's feet would sink beyond his ankles.

A good number of subordinate Police officers in the district owned motor cars. There was no ban on the possession and maintenance of automobiles by the rank and file. A roadworthy vehicle was available for about Rupees three hundred. Petrol was priced at a rupee and in some places annas fifteen for a

gallon of 4.55 litres. Several had in addition motor cycles too. There was one S H.O., who owned a motor car, a motor cycle, a double bullock cart and a horse. This Police Moghul chose his mode of travel more according to his mood, than the need itself. Where did the money to maintain such a many splendoured transport fleet come from? The vigilance branch was not born then. The British Masters had no idea to father such a child. No doubt there were several honest Police Officers. Those who lacked integrity, did not lack the intuition to cover up their tracks and please the victims whom they fleeced. Deceit and dishonesty played nicely into the hands of such officials. Undeterred they pulled out money from the thin air, whenever they fancied. The corrupt practitioners and their practice were seldom exposed. Money was their goal and caprice the path to it. They affirmed the sentiments in the following lines of Pope:

"Get money, money still:

And then let virtue follow, if she will"

The farsighted among those who salted away goodly sums of easy money, never squandered their illegal gains on good clothes or good food, but homed in the flow, to safe and secret places. Some built houses obtaining loans from House Building Societies. This was but a standard part of their facade of honesty. A few ventured to marry off their daughters into affluent families with covert payments of cash and costly gifts Most of them had the wisdom to lay off their immediate needs for the sake of a stable future, for their wards, wives and themselves.

For a conspectus of the areas under my charge, my H. C. accompanied me on several days. We travelled by bullock carts. On one occasion the animal propellants came to a sudden halt. The surfaceless track below consisted of ribbons of corr-

ugated mud caused by unseasonal rains that lashed the area the previous night. Pushing the animals and coaxing them were of no avail. The situation was one of hopelessness and our carter pleaded helplessness. The village we wanted to honour with our visit was hardly two kilometres away. When I suggested footing the distance, my aide was disturbed visibly:

"No..... No..... Impossible ..... Sir;

No, not even an inch" he grizzled.

I was puzzled. It was pointless for me to visit the village solo, since I would strike the chords of neither recognition nor respect. Conversely it was likely, that I could be taken for an impostor. After reflecting for a while, my H C. said:

"If we can't go to the village, we can get the village here"

"How is that" ? I exclaimed eagerly.

"Our carter can carry our message to the village Headman to bring the villagers here", he added in an air of supreme confidence.

I agreed to the proposal, though it was as odd as it was bad. There was no other way out of the impasse. At our instance the carter flew out with an oral message. We rested under the shade of a huge banyan tree with our backs to its bole. The height and girth of of the tree proclaimed its great age.

When my H.C. walked, it was a shuffling, rolling amble. More than most of the essential qualities of a Policeman is easy and quick bodily mobility For this, his shortage was total. His disability was attributable to lack of self-control. He had given great authority to the desires and inclinations of his palate. His eating habits were unorthodox. He ate well, but not wisely. Little wonder, he became an uncouth human, of ludicrous proportions. Being a great

eater and a great sleeper, he was incapable of anything else that was great.

Within a couple of hours, we saw waves of humanity emerging from the horizon. Their silhouettes became clearer, as they came nearer. They were strung in clusters of three or four or a little more. On coming close, the rural folk greeted my H.C, with folded hands. The Headman led the entire crowd. Everyone regarded me with cold indifference as I looked like an errand boy, or at best a raw police constable. I was in civvies. Had I been in the outfit of my rank, all would have recognised me. When the villagers were comfortably seated, my H.C. spoke a few words, introducing me as their new S.H.O. Instantaneously, simultaneously as though by magic, our audience rose to their feet to stare and cheer, and shake their heads in a great gesture of welcome. Many wore dhoties and shirts, while a few in scanty clothing, appeared spent and broken. Some carried sticks across their shoulders. The whole lot of them respectfully raised their weather beaten hands, which bore signs of many a stubborn battle with barren lands. Gentle smiles played upon their lips, lighting up their faces creased by hard labour and poor nourishment, which enhanced their ages. However, their rich spiritual nourishment, was patent from the sacred ashmarks and kumkums on their foreheads. I became forthwith their uncrowned King and the H.C. my Field Marshal. The villagers impressed me as an unpretentious and uncomplicated lot. The onrush of the twentieth century civilisation had no impact on them. They were symbols of the natural dignity and infectious charm of an older and simpler way of life.

The kind people had brought for us tender coconuts fastened together by the strips of their fibrous husks. We refreshed ourselves with the

milk and meat of these delicious gifts. Thereafter, with great fervour and fluency I reeled off a prepared speech in Tamil, explaining the object of my visit and indicating that anybody could reach me at any part of the day or night in case of difficulties, or when crime occurred, to facilitate early action. I thought I had shot my bolt. With a new confidence born out of the welcome extended to me, I looked forward with hope and happiness. During our return journey my H.C. observed that everybody appreciated my visit, though none could understand what I spoke. Disappointed and depressed at this unwelcome revelation, I was rendered speechless for a few minutes. Mustering my nerves, I asked him to elaborate. He was quite outspoken when he affirmed his view. He said I was jittery and my delivery too fast with a confusing sequence of words and phrases. He himself could not comprehend anything, despite his inquisitive ardour.

Chapter 19

A Story behind a story

On May, 9, the Headman of a village reported a case of arson. The arsonist named in the F.I.R. was alleged to have torched the house of a farmer, a man of affluence and influence. Two persons had witnessed the crime. A case under Section 436 Indian Penal Code was registered.

The occurrence was brought to Police notice after twenty eight hours. Investigation revealed that:-

1. The delay in reporting the crime riddled the incident with suspicion. In this regard the complainant had tried to shout away, what he could not explain away.
2. Only the cattle shed in the purlieus of the victim ' s house, was burnt. Several heads of cattle inside were mysteriously saved.
3. Barring the burnt roof of the scene of crime, made of palm fronds, there was no other loss. None of the adjoining houses was affected.
4. The neighbours learnt about the fire only the next morning.
5. The witnesses who saw the accused setting fire to the shed, were agnate cousins of the complainant. The circumstances of their presence at the time and place of crime were too good to be believed.

6. The" author" of the crime was the shadow of a man, being just a school boy. The witnesses who were sturdy men did not prevent the crime or collar the culprit which they could have easily done.

7. The motive for the arson was described as "sheer fun " . This did not seem rational if plausible, or plausible if rational.

1. There were flaws in the factual narration of the eye witnesses, besides too elaborate an embroidery on the development of evidence.

All the above factors floated conspicuously on the surface of the story of the crime. A breakthrough was effected after the interrogation of the accused, whose testimony added an unexpected dimension to the case. He unravelled the mystery and history of the stage-managed crime in a fearless and forthright manner. The handsome culprit who pleaded his innocence in the felony admitted his guilt on another count. He had stolen the heart of the complainant's daughter whom he accused of an identical offence involving his heart. He was nineteen and she sixteen. They were classmates in a nearby co-educational school. The two were good conversationalists and enjoyed rib-tickling humour, at which they tried to excel each other. They laughed their hearts out on many occasions. What invariably happens to a boy and a girl who laugh heartily in each other's company, happened to them. They landed in each other's arms.

In the background of these startling disclosures the father of the girl reputed as a blue-nose, was re-examined. The bold front he had sedulously maintained crumbled He said that his wife had been estranged. Domestic discord had plagued their family life. He was candid enough to confess that he was a pinch penny and she a spendthrift, with a bumptious intent

for sophistication. This led to frayed tempers and frequent quarrels. Their incompatability gradually weighed more and more till their paths separated. So total became their disunion that even a casual reference about each other never passed, their lips. They experienced greatest pleasure in living apart. The absence of the mother gave the young daughter ample scope to drink freely the delights of freedom. She was the seemliest girl in the village. Her appearance at the school was enough to make the boys scream, groan and moan. The father learnt to his dismay that his bantling had lost her heart to her lover, who figured as the culprit in the arson. The boy never deserved the hand of his fair daughter, as he did not measure up to his expectations, in social status and wealth. He added that a search was on for a suitable match for his only daughter and sole heir to his extensive farms and fields, cattle and cottages, besides a sizable amount of hard cash. The ideal choice would fall on a boy with upward financial mobility, abundant social sunshine, and sparkle. Finally, he admitted, he had foisted the case of arson on the accused to make his daughter forget him. If she persisted in marrying her lover, she would forfeit all property. He was sure to bequeath to her only the sky and the sun, the moon and the stars. His was an uncontrolled emotion quite characteristic of a male parent dealing with such an affair on the distaff side.

When investigation unfolded that love was the fulcrum on which the offence of arson turned, everything settled into place, surprisingly, suddenly. To ascertain the version of the 'Helen' of the story, I sought her evidence. She was one who could easily set the standards of feminine grace and charm Her translucent and alive face was beautifully formed. A mathematical survey would pronounce her features sharp and clear cut, with a mouth well-set. Her eyes shot forth a gentle light

and her smile which displayed a fine set of teeth, was infectious. Her hair was parted in the middle and drawn back neatly into a chignon. Not even a disciplined soldier could heed the command "Eyes Front", if she was around.

Speaking with a peerless ping of her cutglass voice, she admitted her love affair sparkling with enthusiasm. She was positive that she would marry the boy of her heart, even if that meant a negative fortune. I gathered that the lovers were steering a determined course on a steep hill. There was no doubt that they had the capacity to reach the summit and enjoy fully, all the pleasures that flowed from their love.

Contrary to expectations, this singular romance escalated to a higher plane of sanctity and splendour quite inconsistent with the temper and tempo of villagers in general in India, during days of yore. The handsome boy and the lissome girl had burnished their genuine love so much, that their love story acquired a magnetic finesse, which became a magnificent obsession with the villagers, who believed that both of them had discovered in each other the rock and anchor of life they craved for. Everyone accepted this unprecedented love affair with perfect calm and considerable charity. There was none who did not wish and work to break the dead-lock and make a wed-lock. Ultimately, filial love threw up its hands in dismay as it could not cure the girl of the disease of obstinacy, despite constant verbal shock therapy. An unwilling father had to relent fully and subscribe to the superiority youth claimed for itself in shaping its destiny. Tradition had to bend, grudgingly though, before the gathering forces of change.

The marriage of the love birds was celebrated in story book splendour of a pixie world with

wonderful spectacles of drinking and dancing, feasting and fireworks. Every one who attended the wedding was impressed with the unusual circumstance, that so beautiful a girl was married to so handsome a boy. Many loudly thought, there was no need for the couple to breathe, since they held the breath of everyone.

The case of arson was disposed of as false. Penal proceedings against the complainant (father of the girl) for invoking the provisions of criminal law on trumped up charges, were shelved to ensure amity between the two families, brought together in the alliance. This was the bruit of an episode of undying love with a romantic beginning and dramatic ending. In my professional life, this case was a watershed event. It produced one of the most durable chestnuts, that stood by me in later years. I developed a sense of cautious approach in dealing with complaints, where personal motives masqueraded deliberate untruth, as decisive truth.

Chapter 20

A Tale of two villages

A few miles from the Police Station not far from the sea coast were two villages. Numerically at par, the residents of each village matched their counterparts in dash and daring. Further, they were so strongly knit by strands of unity and loyalty to the common cause of their respective villages, that these traits dwarfed all other considerations.

Long standing faction and friction between the two sides were the spring boards of recurring fights between them. These clashes during which they sang hymns of hate, did not fail to engender rancour and recrimination that widened the gulf between the two opposites. Their attitude towards their opponents remained steady at one hundred and eighty degrees.

Despite their mutual hostility, there were several things in common between them. Their houses built of bamboo and thatch, surrounded by tall coconut palms were usual sights Smiling children, bleating goats, singing birds in cages, and flapping fowls at large, were usual sights in both villages.

Festive days too were similar. They drank and danced and held community dinners, in which the young and old partook with eager ecstasy. Their

fare on these occasions was so rich and varied as to consign even the urban elites to the shade.

On May 15, violence erupted on a large scale between the twin villages, and several persons were injured. The cause of the flare up was trivial. Goats from one village had strayed into the other. There was a permanent police picket stationed around, but this small force was outwitted by the belligerent enemies who appeared to have graduated from the University of Rank Prejudice, with hatred and violence as their special subjects. As the temperature of bitterness among them registered an all time high, I was ordered to spend my days and nights on the hot bed of trouble with a special task force, at my command.

A copy of the charter of our duties and responsibilities couched in no uncertain terms is below:-

Office of the Deputy Superintendent
of Police, Shermadevi.
Dated May 20, 1939

Order

S H O. Mr. G. PHILLIPS will hand over charge of his Police Station to his Head constable and proceed to the scene of the recent flare up in his limits, with a crack detail of men made available to him already. He should carry out the following orders:-

1. Deploy a picket of a couple of armed constables at important points in both villages.
2. An armed mobile patrol of one H.C. and four constables shall move about in each village and keep close liaison with the armed pickets.
3. No policeman is expected to work normally more than 8 hours a day and four hours at a stretch.

4. The co-operation of the village officials and menials should be enlisted.

5. Cognizable cases should be registered and investigated and disposed of quickly.

6. Diaries of investigated cases, and those of daily recorded work of the constables should reach the undersigned through a special messenger every day.

7. Preventive action should be prompt.

8. Any outbreak of violence during the police presence in the villages will be deemed sufficient grounds to indicate lack of vigilance. Action against the defaulters would be severe.

Sd/- x x x

Deputy Supdt. of Police.

Chapter 21

Not a Bed of Roses

On receipt of the order on May 21, I moved to the troubled area with my task force. Besides, our arms and ammunition, we carried cooking utensils, kerosene stoves, grass mats and a dozen beakers.

There was an old Rest House facing the sea, spacious enough for our occupancy. This structure, was a picture of sincere neglect. Discomfort and dilapidation were the keynotes of this building. Lack of alternate accommodation urged us to accept the available place.

The ceiling was so high, that it could house even a large family of giraffes. We purchased locally green grocery, provisions, a few ewers and Brown Georges. A cook from a nearby village was commissioned. An alcove at the rear of the piazza of our abode served as a kitchenette. The village Headman supplied us with a couple of gimcrack tablet-armchairs, whose seats were warping and rusting. They could be used only if no weight was put on them. I returned these fragile pieces to their source of supply. I was quite young and at any angle my body could bend readily, from its beginning to end. I decided therefore to use a convenient spot on the floor, in the vestibule of Rest House, as my desk and seat.

At 20.00 hrs. we sat down for dinner on grass mats laid on the floor. Opposite to me sat all my men who were free from duty. We used plantain leaves as plates, and our fingers as spoons and forks. The shaded lanterns by our side were throwing circles of unsteady and dim light. Frequent gusts of wind bursting through the shutterless windows extinguished the dancing flames. We could not see what we were eating, but our sensory attributes stood by us. When I transferred a morsel of food mixed with some vegetable gravy, I screamed. Salt and pepper had been used in liberal proportions. My men too shared my experience. That our cook was a good for nothing goof required no further proof. Under a barrage of questions, he admitted that his knowledge of the culinary art was limited to boiling of eggs. He pleaded that he was trying to learn cooking, as an opportunity was afforded to him. The indignation of my policemen got the better of them, and I found it difficult to restrain the irate lot from laying their violent hands on him. Though conscious of the hostile atmosphere he had created around him, our cook was reluctant to leave us, when commanded. The oaf was like the camel, once let in, would not leave the tent. With a great effort we threw out the lummox who had flummoxed us.

A couple of my constables offered to dress a second dinner, which was ready in about an hour. The fragrance of this food, assailed our noses agreeably, and our bellies quivered with pleasurable anticipation. We enjoyed the repast to repletion. The twin police cooks had graduated from the Food Craft Instiutes located in the bungalows of senior Police Officers to whom they were attached as orderlies.

" This abuse of the constabulary in days of old, was due to the brazen practice of in-service conscri-

ption of orderlies as cooks, by a few officials. Many such cooks, cooked their way up as Head constables and Sub-inspectors.

At about 20.30 hrs. our dinner was over. The sea was only a longish stoneshot away. It was a beautiful night and the whole place was flooded with moonlight. The noisy white horses swept into the beach majestically, breaking their silvery foams on the glittering sands. Shallow pools of water left by receding waves shone like jewels. I perambulated on the beach for sometime and returned to the Rest House.

After drilling and marching my men on night duties at about 22.00 hours, I attended to scriptory work. I had carried with me to my camp a bundle of pending papers whose liquidation I could hardly achieve till then. Exactly at midnight, armed with my revolver and accompanied by a constable who carried his rifle, I set out to patrol the trouble spots and to oversee the work of my men, to deter them from huddling together for comfort and companionship.

I returned to the Rest House at 02.00 hours and immediately retired to bed. Sleep eluded me. Frequently, I turned over like an agitated porpoise. Now and then, I sat up and fluffed up my pillows. My thoughts did not preclude events with even zero probability, like the villagers suddenly getting out of their beds at night and trying to settle their scores. I wished to keep awake the whole night, and if that was impossible I thought I should sleep with one eye open. My efforts to dispel silly fears were futile. Had I possessed fear, I could have easily rid myself of it; but it was fear that possessed me roundly, and lulled me through a white night. The very thought that the responsibility for avoiding blood shed in the villages, lay on my shoulders was enough to freeze

my blood. Quite often, I sprang to my feet and peeped through the windows to see if trouble was in sight. Even the bright moonlight did not help to locate any. It was a strange predicament indeed. I lacked the clarity of mind and autonomy of will to decide and deal with a situation, the gravity of which was unforeseeable. My principal hall mark was lack of experience. A greenhorn that I was, I had to stage a feverish struggle to exist each day, before I had gotten my roots into the soil.

My lieutenants were fast asleep. They could curl up anywhere and sleep wrapped them up in minutes. The prerequisite for a restful night of unbroken sleep is the capacity to compose one's mind in any situation, place, time or condition and this gift all my men possessed in generous proportions. With their bodies arched sideways, heads bent inwards. and hands thrust between their legs, they resembled birds sleeping with their beaks buried in their wings. They were my fort and garrison. They had more physical strength than professional skill. It was easy to drive them, but difficult to lead even one. I doubted if it would be possible at all for me to accomplish anything acutely with such an obtuse posse of men who had no more gumption than a bump on a log.

Chapter 22

For whom the Bell Tolls

Skirmishes were reported by both groups against their adversaries. I registered cognizable offences and dealt with them according to law. For several days I was swamped with complaints. Each incident was a web made of threads of different sizes and lengths difficult to believe and incongruous prima-facie. Yet like a manifesto of war every allegation promulgated a supreme sense of justice of their own cause and the extreme iniquity of their opponents. There was no doubt that each side tried to reveal that patent virtues filled their hearts, and conceal the latent vengeance in their heads.

Periodically, I assembled potential killjoys in both villages, and reminded them that if they buffeted the waves of peace, law would unhesitatingly violate their physical freedom by drawing them into its tight embrace. Repeated faggings of talking turkey to the warring groups at official and unofficial levels to bring about durable peace to the riot torn areas were infructuous. The inhabitants of both villages clearly kept their passions in a state of perpetual alarm, to capitalise on even a trifling event, to vindicate what they deemed justice. The recurring knotty problems and intricate postures were good for a policeman to try his courage and

confidence, wit and wisdom. I was helpless. I had none of these virtues. Feeling sad and lost awash in the profession I thought I was a misfit.

There was no method in the proceedings of my investigation except the method of the moment. In each case, I had to weigh with utmost caution, the considerations that were more implicit than explicit. Still I had to function with the greatest degree of expedition and efficiency. Despite my best efforts there developed an atmosphere of suspicion and truculence wherein the Police became suspect before every pair of eyes A situation hardly confederate to peace ensued. I realised that I was no match to the challenges that were complicating the state of affairs beyond the assessment and action that I was capable of. There was an irrepressible longing in me to be divested of the crushing burden of work and worry that was proliferating every day. Belligerent feelings in the villages were mounting with such hideous momentum that a climax at any time was anybody's guess.

June 27, began as a murky day. The sky was overcast with thick dark clouds, which blacked out the sun for a long time. There was a threat of impending rain and the sea was choppy with angry waves lashing the shore. All atonce, we heard the tolling of the village bells, which was their Public Address System. The bells were not sweet or chiming, but angry, abrupt and full throated, publishing a message of alarm. A minor incident in which teenagers were involved suddenly inflamed both factions. A wooded area was the venue of dispute between the youngsters of the two villages over the felling of trees for firewood. Implements for cutting trees, stones and sticks were freely used. The unfortunate episode created opposing points of gravitation to make common cause in support of their respective youths.

As the news of this incident sPread like sylvan conflagration, people gathered on both sides, with threats on their lips, and weapons in their hands. The contenders appeared determined not to let go the golden opportunity to wreak vengeance on their opponents and masscre as many as their wit and hate could accomplish. With hell-for-leather dash of soldiers in action, we raced to the scene fully armed. What we saw was a legion on each side. We wedged ourselves betwixt the swearing sea of humanity, bent upon spelling out instant death and destruction to their enemies. I ordered my men to fan out, fix their bayonents and stand in two rows, back to back, facing the two groups.

Memories of my academic days instantly brought to my mind, the advice of PICKWICK to his friend TUPMAN:-

"When you are caught between two mobs, you must shout with the larger one".

I could neither accept nor apply this advice to the situation we found ourselves in. Tupman was a layman, and I a Policeman. As upholders of law and order, the Police must pursue their duties impartially, in a manner which would enable everyone to hear, see and feel the impartiality.

The crowds closed in. We were encircled and endangered by mob fury, the greatest enemy of peace, reason and religion. We knew that the chances of our being swallowed up by the irate sea of humanity were many. On both sides armed people were seen collecting together like automatons with frightening fervour.

Howbeit, we administered stern warnings to the mobs to disperse forthwith, on pain of violent

action by us which could cause even death. Miffed by our admonition, the crowds became egregiously, defiant, and displayed blatant disregard of possible police action with cries of " Pooh, Pooh ". Despite the grave provocation caused by their obscenities, both visible and audible, we stood patient and firm, determined to sell our lives dearly, whatever may betide.

Impetuous fury appeard to lift everyone off his feet. Suddenly, blinding forks of lightning split the sky, and in their wake came rolls of deafening thunder claps. The impact of these was terrific. We felt seared from head to foot. Within seconds, there was a heavy cloud burst throwing what appeared to be buckets of water over every inch of the area. It was indeed a "rain of terror ', let loose by clouds. The crowd facing us on one side raised a plaintive cry which one hears, when death occurs. Two had been struck dead by lightning, while a few others received burn injuries which blackened their bodies. If the deaths had not been caused by such an open visitation of God, these would have been attributed to the hostilities of their opponents. One and all ran helter-skelter for shelter, cannoning into each other, cursing each other.

Soaked to the skin and chilled to the bone by the pouring rain and dazed by what we had been through, we looked like ghosts of policemen having no semblance to reality. There was none amongst us, whose hands did not shiver, or lips did not quiver. Till then it was my conviction that trembling was never a policeman's lot, but to make others do that, was his part.

This unique experience drove home to me, how easily the tables could be turned. It proved that a policeman's life is not all cakes and ale. We had

an incredible feeling of being alive, despite all that had happened.

We were right at the centre of two highly embittered groups brought together in an indescribably explosive situation. It was a crisis we might not have survived, either to remember or regret. We felt for a while like human pendulums swinging in a large arc. The whole world appeared to undulate over us and around us. When calm was restored,and as the shock waves of the situation was buffeting us, I led my men instinctively to the beach sands. Facing the roaring waves we sank on our knees, closed our eyes, and tossed our hands and heads towards heaven. If ever policemen had offered their heartfelt thanks to God, for merciful deliverance from double faced mob fury, and nature's deadly wrath, we thought, surely, we were those men. Our escape from death was a happy happenstance.

But for the sudden turn of the weather, it was absolute that the ground on which we stood would have been transformed into a battle field with blood flowing overfreely and horror piled upon horror. It was quite apparent that the danger had passed but for the moment and that stringent measures were needed to prevent bloodshed. Immediate action had to be taken to meet the sequence of threats to peace. Evidence gathered to bring the law-breakers to book was on hand. The rains which continued unabated for a few more days served to crib, crab aud contain the factionists. When fair weather prevailed, the inhabitants of both villages were busy mending their shelters reduced to a state of disrepair by nature's havoc.

Chapter 23

An Exodus from Genesis.

At my request, the police prosecutor accompanied by my Inspector arrived at our camp. They traced the origin of the tension and bitterness between the parties diving deep into heaps of police records. They identified the exodus of violent events from their genesis in correct sequence and chronology supported by evidence both oral and documentary. Overnight, charge-sheets under Section 107 Criminal Procedure Code against the ring leaders numbering ten on each side requiring them to keep the peace, for six months with heavy sureties, were got ready. These were filed in the Court of the Sub-Divisional First Class Magistrate the next day.

The enquiry commenced soon. The indicted were defended by the cream of the legal brains of the district. However, all the trouble-mirths were ordered to execute bonds to keep the peace, by the Magistrate, as desired by the police.

Those bound over appealed against the orders. The appeals were transferred to another district. The British Judge who heard both sides patiently and long quoted the following lines from Shakespeare's

"Measure for Measure" as being most appropriate in the context of the proceedings of the cases before him.

"We must not make a scare crow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey:
And let it keep one shape till custom make it,
Their perch, and not their terror."

Mercifully modifying the order of the lower court to a token amount of rupees hundred for each bond, the court observed that it was the historic responsibility of the government to ensure peace and hoped that the instruments of Law and Order would involve the villagers in creating and sustaining a friendly atmosphere by rational and humane methods, till orderliness and endurance of law became a natural way of life with the human forces in conflict.

The hopes of the Judge were not belied. The local Police and administrative machinery geared themselves for outright action. Peace brigades and Vigilance Cells consisting of volunteers from both villages swung into action under the guidance of leading villagers and local officials.

Seasoned men from far and near were brought as mediators. They were respectable persons with talents for compromise and capable of holding off hot heads. At specially organised meetings, they did some deft acting and set the pace for a rapid rapproachment between the contenders. They isolated the militants from their militancy. The conditions of compromise enunciated were not material pounded out on a typewriter laying crisp clauses of red tape, but were pragmatic products of earnest thinking by worldly wise men who were experts in doctoring human behaviour. Even the most intransigent felt uneasy to disavow this approach to amity.

Soon the freedom of movement of people in the troubled areas became more secure and their lives less risky. The commitment of the authorities for a just and lasting peace was fulfilled. Crusading hostility, that had become the hall-mark and history of the twin villages, was edged out. Anxiety and fear yielded place to confident co-existence and well being, with a total subsidence of all dissidence.

At long last all the vestiges of emotional bitterness between the enemies, who made history were gathered and thrown into history's dust bin. Happily thus, came to pass "An Exodus of all animus from their Genesis."

For us, thereafter it was a joyful and refreshing time lighted with the special buoyancy that accompanies the accomplishment of a challenging task, untrammelled by the sufferings and sorrows, we had been through.

Chapter 24

A Long Walk

On January 25, 1940, I received an express message graded "most urgent" at about 16.00 hrs., requiring me to report before my Inspector at his headquarters, at 20.00 hrs that night, with all available men. I obeyed.

At 22. 00 hrs. we were told, that since the anticipated duty had been put off, we could return to our station. As we were discussing about the choice of a suitable place for night halt, my constables voiced a suggestion to get back on foot immediately, covering the entire distance of about 28 kilometres. With a happy display of my will and spirit, I endorsed their idea pulling my decision from my hat.

We left the Inspector's headquarters around 23. 00 hrs and tramped enthusiastically. Songs by turns helped to keep boredom at bay and weariness away. After about 12 kilometres, two of my men complained of fatigue and were allowed to drop out. We slaked our burning thirst by quaffing Adam's ale intermittently from wayside hydrants. Being too tired to sing. we marched silently. After about an hour and a half, three more men complained of pain in their legs, and they too were permitted to stay back.

During the ultimate stage of my pedestrian paces, there was only one constable with me. He was Balasubramania Pillai, an old man of 53 years. Drained of all energy, and handicapped by age, he was visibly allout short of flogging himself, to get his tired feet carry his weary body into movement. I admired his stamina emerging out of the sheer stubbornness of his will. Pains had developed in my knees down to my ankles, and my legs appeared to be giving away, beneath my body. However, I persisted in pushing myself forward, though fatigued, footsore, and famishing. I reached my police Station at 05.00hrs. After recording my arrival, I waddled to my house and plummeted on my bed. Profound sleep appropriated me almost immediately.

At 07.00hrs. I was woken up by my servant. He reported the arrival of an uniformed constable, who wanted to see me urgently, officially. He was called in. I made an effort to rise from my bed, but staggered and slumped. It looked as though I had contracted elephantiasis. My legs were swollen beyond recognition. I was alarmed quite a bit by the message the constable had brought. It was a report from the Headman of a village about seven miles away, along the sea coast, who forestalled an armed confrontation between two groups of intransigent villagers who were bent upon holding their welfare committee meetings in the same building, at the same time that day. My presence with a police party was sought in urgent earnestness, not later than 11.00hrs. to stall a possible bloody catastrophy, the dimensions of which, were thought to be beyond prediction.

Having carried the entire weight of my body throughout the long journey of about 28 kilometres, my feet which were badly swollen needed rest, care and kindness. The least I could do was not to torture them with further strain.

No doubt I became a victim of a self-effacing rasp due to my ambition for adventure. All the six men who had accompanied me on foot were immobilised. Out of nine constables on the muster-roll, one worked as Station Writer, and another as sentry. There was therefore only one left. For such an emergency, one was worse than none. The situation appeared insuperable and my luck at its worst. Sunk in spirits, and shrunk in body, I pondered over the matter in sore perplexity. That I had to take a hurried decision, worried me. The Inspector was twentyeight kilometres away and the nearest police station, equally far. There was none whom I could consult. My Head constable was on long leave and my station writer was an inexperienced stripling. My constabulary was only a machinery. They were incapable of independent thought or action, even to a fraction. This small force whatever its worth, I had forfeited, by my thoughtless long march of the previous night. The exact savvy required to match the situation, eluded my imagination and exceeded my grasp. Caught in the slough of despond, I felt like a blind man on a blind horse upon a deep valley.

Sentimentality rather than sensibility vanquished me. As I could not solve the problem I dissolved into tears. With head in hands I moaned. However, within minutes pulling myself together, I reflected with an intent frame of mind, and arrived at the following decisions :-

1. To request the neighbouring Station House Officer to depute four men to report to me at the village in question. Thanks to the services of a beetmister, a message was despatched.

2 To proceed to the village accompanied by my only constable in a bullock cart in which I could lie supine extending my body to its full length. The needed transport was procured. I was helped,

into the cart by my constable, who chose to follow it on foot. On hard and even ground when the bullocks whirled their way, my constable's feet chased each other and as the cart see-sawed on rocky terrain, he adjusted his paces. The wheels of the cart sighed and cried as if protesting against the bad track below. My policeman, sturdy and well-built, was ready to power the wheels of my transport with the muscles of his robust arms whenever needed. The journey was dead-alive.

Around 09.30 hrs. I reached the village and rode straight to the building where the hostile factions had planned their encounter. The village Headman was already there. When word was passed about my arrival, members of both groups gathered. In a short prolation, I told the assemblage, that I desperately needed undisturbed rest for atleast a couple of hours, which was the only medication for my helpless affliction. I peered into their faces, to study their reaction. Everyone's voice boomed up in an instant concord of approval. I then dozed away.

When the fog of sleep lifted and memory returned, I looked at my watch. It was two hours past noon. I helped myself to an erect posture. The four constables whose services had been requisitioned arrived by a different cross-country route, on foot. They had wisely avoided a detour by bus, which would have been a very protracted affair. I briefed them on their duties and made arrangements for their board and lodge.

There was absolutely no let up in my discomfort. Nevertheless, I directed the Headman to summon both parties. They turned up in large numbers. The leaders of the two groups were requested to come forward and sit together. They were reluctant to do that. I tried to persuade them to accommodate

themselves in two rows on the floor of the hall, to my right and left, facing each other. They preferred to face me only. Each group averted the eyes of their opponents in a show of genuine deliberation. The Headman conveyed that the entire gathering of villagers unanimously viewed that the enquiry could be postponed due to my physical condition. I appreciated their sentiments, but wished to go ahead with the task on hand. However, the will of the people prevailed. I expressed my gratitude for their ponderation over my health. I recorded their voluntary statements, offering to keep the peace pending my enquiry into their dispute, which I promised to resolve without seeking the aid of law.

The following Sunday, I summoned the parties for the enquiry. The villagers turned up in multitude. They sat down on the green lawns adjoining the Rest House, in a tight cluster, elbowing themselves into positions of comfort. What struck me was the absence of groupings. The Headman, who was present, had the winning cards of the difficult game, in his hands. When I commanded him to my presence, he stimulated and fortified his spirits with a pinch of snuff, dusted his nose with a brown tissue and walked up to me briskly. His face lit up, when he produced an order of the Special Officer for war efforts, liquidating both the Welfare Committees, and creating a Village Council, for collecting funds. In this Council the rival groups had their share of equal representation and responsibilities as office bearers. The contenders had agreed in writing to form a homogeneous set-up in all honorificabilitudinity to serve unitedly the country and the Government at a time when the Free world was fighting the enemies of Freedom. Those who had appeared on summons affirmed that they had buried their differences. Thus in the fires of the world War II. was shaped the iron, to strike the enmical factions into unity, amity and unanimity.

In dazed disbelief, I noted that faction and friction in an important area of my charge had become things of the past. The two groups, had earlier, a few days ago in their own village, declined to took in the eyes of each other. Surprisingly, at this get-together when they exchanged good natured banters, and good humoured laughter, I thought what I saw and heard were incredible. However, there was no reason to disbelieve the evidence of my senses. The Village Headman and a few others added, that my presence in their midst on the crucial day, had helped to give a happy twist to the course of events. Otherwise, they felt, an incendiary situation beyond definition, or even description, would surely have developed.

"Not at all" I interposed

"I only slept soundly on your frenzied issue, at the very place where the burning fuse was running close to the powder keg", I added.

"That is exactly what we mean, Sir" said a gray haired and gaunt villager long in the tooth.

"In your sleep, you rolled over the burning fuse and extinguished it" he burst out. His exuberant behaviour and the cheeriness of his voice and words made him appear like one who had bounced from the pages of Dickens. Peals of mirth set off by hand claps and convulsions of laughter filled the air.

Instantly fired by a joyous eclat, the villagers sprang to their feet, formed a human chain linking their hands and made a ring around me. They danced and sang songs of full brotherhood, voicing hopes for a lasting peace and vowing to avoid throwbacks to old ways. At their request, I too joined the chorus and danced with them, most of whom were decorously inebriated.

Chapter 25

A Case of Dacoity.

On June 8, 1940, there occurred a case of highway dacoity. It was a weekly market day at Thisayanvilai, and traders were returning home with the cash realised from the sale of their merchandise.

Most of them were travelling in their buggies. At a distance of about 4 miles, west of the Police Station under the cover of gathering darkness, a caravan of carts was intercepted, and some of the travellers were attacked with stones, sticks and spears. Cash and other belongings were looted. A few of the victims inflicted injuries on a few of the dacoits with sticks. Two armed constables of my station, who were on duty near the scene of crime were absent. Their ignorance of the dacoity was consummate. They had reported in their beat tickets and note books that nothing of interest occurred during their duty hours. If only, these limbs of law had done their work, the offence would not in all probability have occurred. Even if it did, there was more than an even chance of either apprehending the culprits, or atleast gathering useful clues about them.

Several thousands of rupees in cash and other valuables were lost. Despite vigorous efforts, the

case remained a continuous enigma to me and a concrete stigma on my professional profundity.

The offence committed by my derelict constables was viewed with greater concern, than the one by the dacoits. Ipso-facto, these two reflected clearly the sad state of staff discipline and lack of crime control, for which I was exclusively responsible. I was kind to my men and my attitude was misconstrued as a weakness. On a couple of occasions, I had dropped action against a few of my constables, for their serious delinquencies. It became my second nature to employ software to cut through hardware. Metaphorically, the long rope I gave to my staff was used by them to hang me.

The following maxim attributed to Cleobulus was most true in my case:

"He who spares the bad, seeks to corrupt the good"

I realised that my good nature was imposed upon by serious defaults even by those who were earlier dutiful

A week later, I received a memo from a bordering Station House Officer intimating the likely complicity of some criminals living in his limits, in this dacoity case. Setting aside the valuable clue in the sensational crime I proceeded to investigate a case of minor cattle theft. Losing all sense of urgency and priority I behaved like a man who seeing his house ablaze threw his baby out of the window and carried the cradle in his arms to safety. I cannot forgive myself for this neglect which was a grave dereliction. I deemed it to be only a casual observation without much substance in it. I had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Two more cases of dacoity later occurred in two neighbouring Police stations. The persons concerned in all the three

cases, were none other than those against whom suspicion had been levelled in the memo cited. Mine was a macabre bloomer. Future became the past, as I had delayed action, till no action, was needed. My worst enemy, I became.

Under the orders of the S.P., a detective squad was organised to probe into all the three cases of dacoity. The investigators verified the information I had. Later they arrested and interrogated the suspects. Most of the properties lost in all the three cases were recovered. The investigators did a very good job by piecing together odds and ends of valuable junks of evidence, and constructed a very good case.

I was credited with the dubious distinction of grave neglect of my bounden duty to pursue the clues in a serious outbreak of crime. No doubt, I was guilty of culpable indifference which was self-induced and self-incriminating. A golden opportunity to apprehend the dacoits, I had allowed to slip through my fingers. I was hauled up on a serious charge of grave omission of duty and the papers were processed for a condign punishment, which I deserved.

Strangely, I received no punishment and it was not in my interest to find out, why I was not punished. In the early fifties, the mystery unfolded itself. During the course of my casual talk with a retired clerk of the police office, a discussion about the above papers ensued. He recalled with a smile, how he had inadvertently placed the file in question in the record room between the covers of some other papers. Seven years later the bunch was discovered by a colleague accidentally. Due to the long delay, the whole matter was rendered short of action.

All the knights of the road in the three cases were jailed for long terms. The convictions were mostly based on:-

1. The identification of the accused and the looted properties by the victims.
2. Evidence of having seen the dacoits near the scene in a tea shop prior to the crime.
3. Testimony of goldsmiths, pawn-prokers, and others who had bought the jewellery from the dacoits.
4. The purchase of a piece of land by some of the accused a week after the crime, on joint ownership.
5. The criminal antecedents of the culprits which invited heavy penalties under section 75 of the Indian Penal Code.

Chapter 26

The New Inspector.

The Inspector of our circle, Mr. S.N. Pandiperumal Pillai retired on July 1, 1940. He was a kind hearted officer who knew his job to perfection. He carried the circle with him producing harmony in the short sprint and unity in the long run. Sober and well balanced, he was of a religious disposition, mild in demeanour, correct in language and conversation and simple in living habits. During the difficult days of my early career he was my leading light. He handed over charge to the senior most S.H.O., the late Mr. G. S. Martin who retired as a Superintendent of Police in 1967 and died in 1981.

Mr. Martin was an unassuming and clear headed officer who believed only in honesty and industry. He remained steeped in calm even if a mighty tempest gathered around. He had great confidence in himself. His imagination, ingenuity and total logic to surmount any challenging situation ever stood by him. When he reached the senior levels of Deputy Superintendent and District Superintendent of Police he was like a storage battery. He enabled his subordinates to draw their strength freely from him.

The new Inspector took over by the middle of August. When I called on him, he was attending to official papers. After seating me, he started talking. He was tall and personable, soft spoken and suave. Almost immediately he ordered for two cups of coffee. I was overwhelmed at the quick manifestation of his hospitality.

Soon the two cups were on his table. He was eager to know the details of the working of my police station, staff position and crime situation. I began to brief him to the best of my knowledge and capacity. With a very slow motion of his hand he drew one of the cups towards him. Lifting it up gently, he sampled the contents. I continued to talk, every minute expecting to be told to help myself with the other cup. I had travelled for more than an hour in a coal-powered rackety and rickety bus which coughed and sneezed all the way. Further, the helpless passengers were rocked not only to the right and left by the potholes and puddles on the road, but back and forth as well, by the leap-frog pattern of the vehicle's mobility.

As the Inspector continued to ply me with questions, I had to explain and explicate all what he desired. Adjusting his generous hams he stretched his hand towards the second cup. I was about to take it to save him the trouble of gifting it to me across the table. My modesty was the deterrent. He drew the cup towards himself raised it to his lips, and started sipping the drink, souring all my soaring hopes. I was exhausted when I concluded my talk. No doubt he offered me thanks galore for having enlightened him so much, within so small a space of time. As I rose to leave, I apprised him of the bail application in a burglary case of my station, that was posted in the Sessions Court the next day. He was happy to hear this news. He said this would

give him a valid ground to visit the district headquarters where he could attend the court and call on Mr. Underwood, the Superintendent of Police. There were clear orders that none should expend time and energy for the sole purpose of calling on the S.P.

The next morning I was at the Sessions Court on time. The Inspector too arrived promptly. The bail petition was taken up at 11.00 hrs. and the arguments on behalf of the accused and the prosecution were over in twenty minutes. The prayer of the accused was rejected.

The Inspector left immediately for the bungalow of the S.P., directing me to await him at the local Police club where he desired to host me a lunch. Till 16.30 hrs. he did not arrive Unable to abolish my hunger, I abated it with a cup of tea, and continued to wait. The last bus to my headquarters was to depart at 17.00 hrs. I was at sixes and sevens. Fortunately, the Inspector arrived at 16. 40 hrs and regretted his delay. Having had his lunch, he very kindly permitted me to have mine and get back to my Police Station. In doleful spirits, I hitch-hiked to the bus station and boarded the vehicle bound for my destination. I reached my house at about 20.00 hrs. The food was cold and stiff but I was too hungry and tired to be fastidious. It was a combined lunch and dinner, which I bolted with a relish I had never experienced before.

There was an air of chilling gravity about my Inspector. Nobody had ever seen him laugh. He was like one of those born in the later part of the seventeenth century England, who viewed laughter as no part of behaviour of a gentleman of taste and refinement. Swift, born in 1667 could recall only two occasions when he laughed. The sister of Pope (born in 1688) had mentioned that she had never

seen her brother laugh heartily. Lord Chesterfield too, who believed in elegant manners had recorded in one of his famous letters to his son " In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal and so ill bred as audible laughter ".

What hurt my Inspector badly was good humour be it crudely clothed or finely polished. Keeping himself to himself he lived in a world of his own into which he permitted no intrusions. He was a strange synthesis of witting diligence and unwitting dilatoriness. With a heavy workload on his desk, he would spend all night rummaging his files and faculties for possible adverse off-shoots or consequences of a comment, instruction or order he had in mind. Very often, he teetered on the point of a pin, came close to decisions but never decided at all. Repeatedly he was weighed in the balance and found wanting by senior officers, who regretted when their efforts to reform him, failed. Ultimately, he was stripped of the stars and stripes of his rank on grounds of indecision, ineptitude and incorrigibility.

Thus, the Inspector fell into a grave he had dug for himself with the implement of irresolution powered by the emotive forces of his utopian conscience that stubbornly refused to settle for anything less than the perfect ideal. His was a life of strain and sadness patiently borne, with all valleys and no peaks.

Chapter 27

A case of rioting and murder

During the first week of September 1940, I proceeded on casual leave for seven days for attention to my personal affairs. However, I returned two days in advance.

Hardly had I stepped into my house, when I saw one of my constables in a nearby alley. When he came within hail, I accosted him. I learnt that a case of rioting and murder had occurred in a village about 22 kilometres away involving one death and injuries to many, the previous night. The village Headman's report had been received just then.

I addressed my steps to the Police Station immediately, cancelled the unexpired portion of my leave, had the case registered and hotfooted it to the village of occurrence. The scene of crime looked like a mini theatre of war with a colossal litter of stones, sticks and bricks, besides other missiles of all description in chaotic profusion. Barring a few relatives of the deceased and their neighbours the whole area was a gloomy spectacle of desolation.

Inquest under Section 174 Criminal Procedure Code was held in the presence of Panchayatdars,

who returned an unanimous verdict that the deceased had died of injuries caused on his head by stones. The body was despatched for postmortem examination to the nearest Government hospital, in charge of a couple of armed constables.

The Inspector arrived shortly thereafter and took over the investigation. Two groups of people belonging to different communities had a head-on clash over grazing of cattle on a piece of land. It was a chance medley and there was no history of communal tension or discord there, though interested persons liked to have it that way.

Our close-up of the crime highlighted the following : -

1. For years on end, the land was commonable and all villagers had assented to commonage. Till the day of the clash, there was not even a single fracas worth the name.

2. Both groups were separated by a distance of about forty yards, during the clash which occurred just after dusk.

3. No lethal weapons were used.

4. It was not possible for any group to see their opponents clearly under the cover of darkness.

5. Only the members of the group to which the deceased belonged, were injured. None in the other, sustained even a scratch. This pinpointed the aggressors. The deceased was killed by stones which hit him on the head, fracturing his skull.

6. Witnesses from among the injured had named their opponents since they were seen at the place of rioting before dusk. No specific act was attributed to anyone.

7. One of the accused was found to have been bedridden for a long time, which falsified his involvement in the crime.
8. Continuous investigation only resulted in the continuous surfacing of bubbles.
9. It was clear that none spoke the truth, since none regarded it as a virtue.
10. Efforts to induce revelations of reality on the part of witnesses, only helped to create in them fresh figments of imagination and tissues of falsehood.

After four days of struggle and stretch, we decided to round off the investigation and return to our respective headquarters. While packing up, a constable arrived with an urgent memo to the Inspector from the Superintendent of Police, which read as follows :-

Inspector.

Enclosed is a telegram relating to investigation of a murder case in your circle.

I would like to have your comments on its contents very early.

Sd/- F.L.Underwood,
Dist. Supdt. of Police.

TELEGRAM

NANGUNERI INSPECTOR AND SUB-INSPECTOR CAMPING VILLAGE FOUR DAYS INVESTIGATING MURDER. MANY CHICKENS KILLED SO FAR. EXACT NUMBER NOT KNOWN. PRAY ORDER BOTH LEAVE VILLAGE ATONCE

VILLAGERS.

TO SUPDT. OF POLICE TIRUNELVELI

The Inspector and I were as much shamed as surprised. During our stay in the village of crime, on the credentials of the Headman, we had commiss ioned a local to supply us our daily food for spot cash. He had served chicken curry twice, with two pieces of white meat on each occasion.

Enquiries revealed, that our chef, an expert in chicken delicacy had very delicate hands. He was gifted with the adroitness of overpowering and seizing the birds required for the table, before they could betray him. He had been on a series of successful thefts in the village, from which men, women and children had effected panicky exodus after the murder. Encouraged by his unhampered exploits in the scene village, he had extended his forays into the peripheral territories box and cox. We compensated all the victims with cash, for the loss of their poultry, the lion's share of which was appropriated by our cook.

" When a cook cooks a fly, he keeps the best wing"

— Polish Proverb

On return to his headquarters, the Inspector sent a detailed report regretting the incident, and indicating that those who had lost were reimbursed. Mr. Underwood treated the affair as a closed book, without comment or commitment. He did not permit this unfortunate development to dim his faith in our integrity or diminsh the warmth of his attitude to us.

The investigation of the murder case was completed. Some of the accused who were earlier arrested, or had surrendered in court were already on bail.

The accused contended that the prosecution had twisted the facts of the case to make a noose around

their necks, with the help of interested witnesses who had woven an interesting story. The evidence let in was neither direct nor circumstantial but dangerously inferential.

The Sessions Judge acquitted all in the dock of all charges, as according to him the evidence adduced alienated all trust.

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In Sept 1949 enquiring into a case of rioting in Hangu was made. The evidence Affidavit days of Head examinations investigations, the eviden in only sufficed to free all accused since no one would speak the truth and the inspector was served a warrant as to why who stole the ornaments of the village! This ~~to be~~ ~~for~~ Their public image is tarnished by untrustworthy testimony! a served the court deserve!

Chapter 28

A Long Night into Day

By middle of May 1941. I received orders of transfer to Sankaranainarkoil Police Station at the north wastern end of the district at a distance of about 120 kilometres. My successor had indicated by letter, his desire to take over on the 24th of the month at 7. 30 hrs.

I put in extra hours to liquidate the heavy pendency of papers, disposal of old cases, and writeup of records. On the 23rd a case of simple hurt was posted before a Sub.- Magistrate about sixty kilometres' away, for recording my evidence. I was anxious to round off this responsibility as it would save me the trouble of a long trip from my future station.

I was at the court at 11.00 hrs The Magistrate who had gone to the district headuarters returned only in the evening. He took up my case almost immediately. The defence lawyer subjected me to a lengthy cross examination beyond all expectation. His questions centred around certain very minor details, which though relevant, had escaped my notice. My efforts to ballast my memory only blasted it. The lawyer never spared himself to confound the confusion in my mind. His success

was unique. I botched and cut a very sorry figure. My enquiries had been hurried and haphazard, as my visit to the scene of crime was a hit-and-run one.

The Magistrate was visibly annoyed with the show I put up. Later in his chamber, I apologised to him for my lapse, and this saved me from strictures in his judgment The case was thown out. I learnt a bitter lesson which was not lost on me, the whole of my life. That day, I resolved to investigate even trifling cases thoroughly and prepare perfectly for tendering evidence in court. I honoured my resolution, till the end of my career.

My record of investigation was akin to the report of a new Freelance Journalist. There were no points of explanation or emphasis with no attempt at analysis or pursuit of motive. The scope of interpretation, of facts was confusing and at times contradictory, thanks to the vagueness of words begotten by the shallowness of ideas that sprang from the hollowness of my output.

I decided to reach my station at any cost that night itself, to avoid discomposure to my successor. There was only one way out of the situation. I had to travel by a bullock cart for a major portion of the night, through a cross-country route of massively irregular tracks. I opted to undergo the carking journey, fully aware of the acute discomfort involved. After supper I started at 21 30 hrs. It was impossible to sit erect, since the cart tossed from side to side, like a lighter buffeted by heavy winds at sea. I extended my frame inside my transport. I warned my cartman to be alert as we had to course through unpeopled areas of vast barren tracts of ups and downs, littered with boulders. He assured me that he would be wakeful and careful. I fell asleep.

Awakened by the cawing of crows and crowing of cocks, I sat up and saluted the firstrays of sun light

that met my eyes. The cart was stationary. The cartman had disappeared. The halters of the animals, hitched to the cart, had been crossed and carefully knotted to the coach-box. The whip was in the Whip-Socket. In vain did I try to locate where I was. Any knowledge about the place appeared to be the private privilege of the bullocks. I was not aware of any technique to extort confessions, from their mouths. The only thing I could do, I did and that was to regret the animals were not criminals. I dismounted and asked a passerby if I was close to my destination, He burst into a great guffaw. Collecting himself with palpable constraint, he told me where I was. That was the very place, from where I had started on my unique venture the previous night. I was baffled. After I began to sleep, or perhaps even earlier, the cartman had obviously fallen into the arms of an identical bliss. The bullocks after a tiring walk, negotiated a circus unhindered, and duly returned to the place to which they belonged. I was convinced that my nocturnal transporter had fled out of sheer fear of my wrath, leaving me to my fate, in a sorry state. My feelings were initially a mixture of shame and chagrin, but later of self-reproachment and regret. The culprit was within me. It was my awry imagination. I should have had the wisdom ", I thought, " to have abstained from such an eyre especially when the matter had no professional priority." I had unerringly placed my bet on a wrong horse, by embarking on the needless overnight odyssey.

I knocked at the nearest door. It happened to be the house of a clerk of the Magistrate's court where I gave evidence the previous day. I narrated my tale of woe and requested him to relieve me of the burden of the bullocks and the cart.

" You need not worry on this account " he said.

" I shall look after them; they are right in front of my house. Surely, the claimant is bound to be here soon ".

I thanked him and after a hasty handshake, raced to the bus station. I boarded the first vehicle at 06.30 hrs and reached my destination at 09.00 hrs.

I was surprised to note that my successor had not arrived. Howbeit, I got ready everything to facilitate a quick transfer of charge. He showed up at 16. 45 hrs with profuse apologies for having upset the time schedule. His late arrival accorded with my predilection. I could eliminate haste in putting things on their correct bearings. I made over at 17.00 hrs. on May 24.

Chapter 29

Sankaranainarkoil

This was a heavy charge with two out-posts. The station was without any S.H.O. for a long time, and the state of affairs were far from happy. I checked the arms, ammunition and records before taking over formally. My subalterns assured that all other Government properties were correct; they persuaded me to give up the tediously needless exercise of their physical verification in detail. I accepted their positivity and acknowledged in writing the receipt of every item.

The S.D.P.O. received orders of transfer. For the departing officer a farewell party was hosted, mostly on the initiative of his admirers. On this occasion there was such a flow of flowery hyperbole and shower of platitude, that even the least self-conscious, mortal would have been overwhelmed.

In his brief reply he thanked one and all for honouring him. His tone sank into an inaudible murmur when he said " Good-bye to all of you ". It was then that many shrieked their tears as if some close relative was either dying or dead. After the function, as the chief guest slowly paced back towards his car, he was repeatedly shot and bombed. The culprits were his loyalists. He endured the or-

deal patiently. The shots were camera shots and bombs rose-flowerbombs.

His successor took over soon. He had an easy and charming way to administer his office effortlessly. He possessed a high minded generosity that ignored small mistakes. His qualities were as natural to him as it is for the sun to shine or the vines to grow grapes.

After about a fortnight a team of officials arrived for the annual check of Government properties. It was their avowed aim to expose defeciencies. The discoveries they made were to their professional credit and my fiscal debit. Articles worth about one hundred and fifty rupees were missing. Since I had acknowledged all these, I was askedto pay their cost or face an enquiry. I chose the lesser evil of monetary payment. I knew fully well, that in the event of an enquiry, I had only God, as my witness who cannot be summoned.

Our Superintendent of Police, Mr. F.L. Underwood was transferred during the last week of June, 1941, and Mr, G.H.P.Bailey who was the Principal at the Police School at Vellore took over.

Mr. Underwood was hardy and hardworking. He studied every paper methodically and passed clear orders on them. His notes and scripts were remarkable exercises in clarity, and common sense. His style was unique and could advantageously be compared with the best effusions in top British journals popular in India then. He remembered the major crimes in the district and issued direct personal instructions on many occasions to the investigating staff, cutting the barriers of rank and status. In a case of robbery which occurred in my jurisdiction he sent me a detailed briefing in his own handwriting indicating the various places and persons to be kept in view, during investigative

action. I implemented his guidelines and soon knocked at the door of the real culprit. His arrest led to the recovery of the properties lost in the case. It was therefore very clear that Mr. Underwood maintained a ready reckoner or some kind of lexicon regarding crime and criminals of the district. As a treasure trove of professional expertise, he was a definite signpost at difficult crossoads. Such a wealth of knowledge could be earned only by devoted study, backed by an analytical and persevering mind. He was an epitome of finest human behaviour, calm, cool and sedate. Anger and harsh words were alien to his nature. He was both competent and tolerant with a very distinguished bearing devoid of airs or affectations. He was polite to everyone with the kind of courtesy that springs from a genuine interest in others.

Before he retired, Mr. Underwood officiated as Inspector-General of Police, Madras. He richly deserved the sceptre and crown of this majestic office.

As was his wont, Mr. Bailey addressed himself to the task of touring the whole district, meeting all Police Officers, and visiting villages for study of crime and criminals, first hand. With unalloyed sincerity he enquired about the conditions of life and work of the rank and file of the Force and invited suggestions from the lowest to the highest, for improvement in all fields of police activity and welfare. His excellent knowledge of the regional language gave him an additional edge for his otherwise keen acumen.

Very soon he brought about several improvements inter-alia the following :-

* Creation of new Police stations in crime-ridden and intractable areas.

* Upgrading of outposts with sizable population, jurisdiction and crime incidence into full fledged police stations.
* Bifurcation of heavy police stations. Tuticorin Town was divided into two wings to handle crime and law and order. In Koilpatti, a new station consisting of several interior villages was carved out and located at Vanaramutty.
* Augmented the strength in a good majority of police stations.
* Cut down paper work by underlining the need for brevity in police reports and case diaries.
* Annulled certain restrictions on travelling allowances which were within his powers.
* Made available police jeeps from the head-quarters to police officers, to reach out into far flung villages during an emergency or when a grave crime occurred.
* Prescribed working dress for the subordinate ranks during inspections by senior officers of the district.
* Encouraged officers of all ranks to meet him about problems, which their seniors could not solve.
* Impressed on all concerned the need to use judiciously the provisions of Sec. 157 (i) (b) Criminal Procedure Code to refuse investigation into cases of simple assault, house tresspass etc., exaggerated with the addition of theft.
* Liberally rewarded private personnel who assisted the police.
* Upgraded the status of constable station writers in Circle headquarter-police Stations into that of Head constables. A few heavy moffusil police

Mr. F. L. Underwood I. P.

stations like Kalakad, Chermadevi, Puliangudi and Vickramasingapuram were also favoured by this order.

* He exerted his best influence to cultivate Police men's pride in work well-done, which he believed would spell out happy results.

These were intended to be carrots. There was a bundle of sticks as well. He awarded exemplary punishments to those guilty of moral turpitude, corruption, drunkenness, misbehaviour with the public, dereliction of duty and indiscipline. Many undesirable elements unworthy of their salt met their waterloo. In fine, he was one who was anxious to pioneer replicable models for public good and police welfare.

Mr. Bailey paid a visit to Sankaranainarkoil in September, 1941, when he toured selected villages where hardened criminals lived, interviewed them and enquired about their mode of life. He also met the staff of the police station and assessed their working conditions and problems. His pointed questions and specific answers he desired, proved that he was no superficial enquirer.

During his subsequent visit, towards the end of October, he distributed cash rewards and certificates to those who helped the police to detect cases. He spoke in good vernacular with felicitous impromptu touching the hearts of those who heard him.

When I called on Mr. Bailey at the local Travellers' Bungalow he told me of my transfer to Tuticorin as Foreigners' Registration Officer, in place of Mr. Lovatte, a British official posted elsewhere.

Chapter 30

Anatomy of a Strategy

I reported at Tuticorin during the first week of November. I understudied Mr. Lovatte for a fortnight and thereafter operated independently under his shadow for a week before I relieved him from the post of Foreigners' Registration Officer.

The job of F.R.O. involved visits to incoming ships berthed on the high seas, and registering Foreigners before they disembarked. There was no harbour those days, and access to the vessels was by motor launches owned by the Shipping Agencies. The work was very light, since only two passenger steamers called at Tuticorin in a week. This consequenced the traffic branch of the Town Police Station, becoming a segment of my responsibility.

It was the month of December. A steamer which called at Tuticorin was berthed on the high seas. Her captain sent a distress call to their Shipping Agents about an Able Seaman, an Indian National, discharged from service. He had refused to leave the ship, and threatened to commit suicide, if force was used against him. He was described as a desperate character who deserved to be taken away from the ship.

The Shipping Agents forwarded the message of the Captain to me along with a brief history of the individual. He was wanted in a case of murder by the Bombay Police who were in possession of an arrest warrant for his apprehension. Three escort constables on prior intimation about the arrival of the steamer were already in Tuticorin to take charge of the seaman when he landed. Since it was decided to ferry the wanted man to the shore without resort to force, the need for a skilful technique was indicated. An imaginative strategy tailored to match possible hazards had to be evolved.

After a couple of hours of discussion with the top officers of the Shipping Agency, the following course of action was decided upon. I was to play the role of an employee of their firm to carry orders of appointment of the seaman on identical salary, status and allowances on another steamer. This was a false story. The success of my mission entirely rested on my capacity to tell an out-and-out lie, with the straightest face I was capable of. An outfit bearing the stripes and stars of the firm and the needed papers were supplied to me. I readied myself to proceed to the ship. The following sapience of Nicholas Murray Butler flashed repeatedly on my mind.

> "Any fool can tell the truth;
> But it requires a man of some sense to know how to lie well"

I decided to steer my efforts according to the plan with greatest nicety, to thwart any attempt on the part of the seaman to knock me into a cocked hat.

At about 17.00 hrs. I left in a motor launch. It was of British make, comfortable and convenient, well-tended and attractive with Company crests proudly emblazoned on the funnels. The steady

and speedy course of the vessel was unaffected and unmindful of the violent slapping of sea water on its belly and sides. This gave proof of its built-in strength and dependability like an old Victorian Railway Engine or a Grandfather Clock. When she gathered momentum forging ahead chipping and cutting the water, I saw several schools of fish leaping into the air and vanishing into the sea. It was a beautiful sight. I reached the ship in about 40 minutes. To board it I vaulted my body at every step on a Jacob's ladder, an unfortunate slip from which would have taken me to Davy Jones' Locker. With difficulty I hoisted myself on the deck. Striding straight to the Captain's cabin, I introduced myself to him. He was a portly, rubicand Englishman in his early fifties. I was pleasantly surprised at the sprightly way he received me. I confided to him my identity, the purpose of my visit and the technique to be adopted. He extended his full support in the matter and confirmed it by shaking hands the soul-brother way. He quipped thereafter saying "So, You are a Policeman; but I really thought, You are a gentleman". His conversation was salted with sincerity and laced with humour. Nobody who had met him even once could afford to forget him. His comic weapon was a string of jokes which he pulled freely. He had an aquiline nose and a projecting chin. Both appeared to be trying to meet each other across his lips, when he talked. I enjoyed the experience of meeting him.

Wearing a bright metallic smile, I approached the seaman in an arch manner. With an observant gaze, he looked at me. He was a youth of thirty or thereabout, who stood just above middle height. He was of copper colour and sported a pointed beard like an Elizabethan seaman. His chest had a healthy forward thrust, and the perfect ease of his strong body was fascinating. With an accent in

which I had briefly schooled my tongue, I accosted him and explicated the purpose of my mission with the help of the document I carried. Quite palpably, he regarded me with round-eyed wonder, not unmingled with that defensive suspicion which grips one in the throes of misfortune. I created an aura of goodwill by switching over to his mother tongue. This helped me to frame him perfectly to take the rap. Suddenly, experiencing a new found affinity, he said, he trusted me. My bearing and behaviour allayed his misgivings. He then embarked on a voluntary monologue expatiating on his efficiency and achievements. Punctuating his effusions with exclamations of pleased surprise, I induced him to believe my appreciation of his calibre and capacity. Thus, did I foster an ingenious confidence that prompted him to cling to my word of promise. Throughout the deft drama I enacted, I was anxious that my face, voice and tongue should cooperate with each other in the right proportions. I was happy they did. He collected his personal effects and bade farewell to his colleagues and bosses, without acrimony or ceremony. Many of the ship's crew who came to the deck to see him off burst into cheers. Little did he realise that this was his last hurrah. He climbed down into the launch.

The launch negotiated a big circle and slowly drifted astern gathering steerage way. As we neared the shore the searchlights of our water transport flickered and flashed, gently touching the landing Pier at several points like a Roving restless finger. We docked at the jetty when complete darkness had gathered around. I clasped the arm of the seaman in a professed gesture of affection. Little did he know that mine was the arm of law, feigning friendship, to achieve the ends of law. We entered a room in the office of the Shipping Agency, where the

Bombay policemen took charge of him, to his utter shock and surprise The cardinal virtue of fraud without force, aided me thus, to accomplish a delicate task.

Peeling off my disguise, I slipped into my uniform and left the building through the postern. laughing in my beard. The success of my assumed identity made me happy. I was more happy to contain my true colour, and content.

I justified the following lines of Charles Caleb Colton :

" It's easier to pretend what you are not,
Than to hide what you really are :
But he, that can accomplish both,
Has little to learn in hypocrisy ".

I cycled home, had a cold water bath and gargled with a strong mouth-wash to dispel the bad taste of lies I had spoken.

When about to relax, I was summoned to an adjacent telephone. At the other end was the Manager of the Shipping Agency.

" I am sorry to trouble you "he started and went on to say " We are indeed grateful for your timely succour "

" It is certainly kind of you to say that;
but surely I have done only my duty " I said.
" You are indeed God's messenger specially sent to help us out of the quagmire " , he emphasised.
Thanking him, I hung up.
" What a Lord of lies ?" I thought,
Almost as good as myself ".

Chapter 31

Mr. Bailey's Visits

During the second week of December 1941, MR Bailey visited Tuticorin. Since there was advance information about his arrival, the Inspector and I were present at the local Travellers' Bungalow to receive him. On seeing us, he flew into a rage. He made it clear in his objurgation, that the Government was not paying us, to waste our time and energy on officers, who knew how to take care of themselves. With gestures of anger he ordered us to vanish from his presence forthwith. While we were briskly marching out he overtook us in his car with a gesticulation that implied "Double up". For us, this silent command was a loud whiplash. We galloped. when we reached the police station, we were out of breath. It took us a little over half an hour to recover from the shock, strain and shake up, we received. In a way our interview with Mr. Bailey was comparable to "SILAT" the Malayan art of offence and defence, wherein an expert can throw his adversaries off their balance with gestures alone, without any physical contact.

Mr. Bailey inspected the Town Police Station, the following day. On alighting from his car he walked straight to the rows of toilets within the station compound. Thereafter he proceeded to the

sub-jail premises under the care of the local police. We had taken elaborate precautions to keep the whole area clean and sanitary. He complimented us for our pains. but wondered whether efforts had been made only to please him. His surmise was correct.

The next visit of Mr Bailey was on December 22 in connection with the tour of an Adviser to the then Governor of Madras, to Tuticorin.

The S,D.P.O had drawn up elaborate plans for the occasion. In the implementation of these, policemen and Civic Guards were deployed in numbers along the route of the V. I. P. inside the town.

Mr. Bailey who arrived a couple of hours earlier than the V. I P was distressed to see the wastage of manpower on the roads. He drove to the police station and questioned the Inspector, about the funny idea behind the arrangements On learning that these were done under the orders of the S.D.P.O., for the safety of the visitor, Mr. Bailey flew off the handle. With a flush of wrath that furrowed his forehead, he spat out loudly in a professional voice, that even the Governor was not provided with so much of security, and ordered the Inspector to recall all the men on duty, except those on traffc beats within ten minutes, on pain of severe punishment to all concerned. A studicd avoidance of display of policeman on the roads was exactly what he desired.

Within seconds, whistles were blasted, available men mobilised, and sent on cycles to direct all policemen and Civic Guards to retreat. Thanks to these fast messengers, the roads were soon cleared of the medley of the motley crowd projected as a big security wrap, which was neither warranted nor wanted.

After about an hour, the S.D.P.O. circled the town in his jalopy. His reaction when he did not find even a single policeman anywere, was more distressing, than that of Mr. Bailey who found many everywhere. Boiling with emotions, and bubbling with indignation, the S.D.P.O. burst into the police station raining fire and brimstone on everyone he ran into. The Inspector told him softly, about Mr Bailey's harsh reaction over the unnecessary show of strength, which resulted in the withdrawal of all personnel. By then most of the hot air had gone out of the situation, but what remained was enough to split the compound nature of the irate S.D.P.O., into simple halves. He catapulted himself into his vehicle, and vanished from the place like a bullet zooming out of the muzzle of a gun when triggered, blasting all vehemence and vexation he had exhibited only seconds earlier.

Chapter 32

The Governor's Tour

Sir Arthur Hope, the Governor of Madras, undertook a tour of all districts to mobilise public opinion in favour of the allies and to help raise funds, for the war effort. He visited Tuticorin during February, 1942.

The town was spruced up to accord a worthy welcome to the Head of the Presidency, who enjoyed a vogue of public respect and admiration. Despite his popularity, slogans appeared on the walls in many strategic places in the town in straggling characters, to the following effect:

"Sir Arthur Hope, Sorry You have no hope"

The police were hardput to see that these writingsjon the walls were not only obliterated but their import did not materialise too. They did their best.

The Governor addressed a very largely attended public meeting in the heart of the town. His speech was a felicitous treat to the ears and his charming personality a feast to the eyes.

Rumour had it that the epigamic Governor, who dazed and dazzled the fair sex, had a kingly eye for queenly maidens. Though no fire was visible in this gossip, clouds of smoke were manifest.

Tall and majestic, sporting a moustache consistent with his dignity, the handsome representative of the British throne traced the history of the world conflict stage, by stage and drove home his point, that the war that was fought, was a war to end war on small nations, and to vouch the freedom of everyone which is his birthright, by ensuring self determination. Rule of law, liberty and dignity of man. His entrancing oration which was punctuated with loud ovation at every stage, was notable for the copiousness of his rhetoric, perfectly matched by the conclusiveness of his logic. Delivering a riposte to the enemy propaganda, he exhorted the people not to tolerate the jeremiads and threnodies of those, who visualised nothing but despair and destruction.

"They are traitors" he said "whose rightful place is within prison walls".

He made a stirring appeal to the gathering not to believe or give currency to rumours, which were unkind, unworthy and untrue. He added that the impression in many minds that he was speaking about a great effort in which he had all part was incorrect. The great effort, he averred was one in which all had a part. He was only conferring as a participant with other participants. His declamation was an extravaganza in terms of the superlative.

He surprised the audience by making a reference to the slogans that had appeared on the walls. His penetrating eyes had caught a glimpse of one of these which had eluded the prodigious vision of hundreds on the job of erasing them. He was happy, he said, to know the minds of atleast some people, but was quite sure that if any one of them was present in the crowd there, he would certainly recoil from the stand he had taken earlier and rejuvenate the war efforts. These words were greeted with waves of applause, that continued for minutes on end.

The Governor's speech had the desired effect. It fired the imagination, and determination of the high and low to stand by the war effort, and to lend to it their physical, moral, and financial support to overcome the powers of darkness trying to envelop the world. The collection of war fund in Madras presidency amounting to several crores of rupees, far exceeded the target. The Governor made over all souvenirs he accepted during the course of his tours, to be auctioned and the proceeds added to the funds. He toured the entire province executing his rhetoric capers, which enriched the war effort. The most outstanding of his gifts was a garland of golden flowers and buds made of full and half sovereigns knit together by fine strings of pure gold of inestimable value. This was a token of loyalty from a leading mill magnate of Coimbatore and it was made over to the district authorities to be auctioned for the war funds. The Governor who stooped a little to receive the garland that reached down to his knees, removed it quickly due to its weight. He was reported to have observed humourously amidst cheers, "I want to save my neck".

The Governor's visit to Tuticorin gave all police officers a hard time. Being the youngest of the lot, I found myself at a pinch, time and again. Leading about a dozen men, I was put through assignments of a design and description beyond prediction. The unscheduled movements of the Governor to a number of places kept us at the double and exhausted us. These exercises we sweated out with industry and intellection drew from senior officers, vocal praises, in unequivocal phrases. They identified our long hours of cheerful labour with exemplary duty. These spontaneous comments greatly ministered to our self-esteem and self-satisfaction.

Chapter 33

I Seek a Transfer

As Foreigners' Registration Officer, I had completed more than sixteen months by April, 1943. There was little to do and I was tired of functioning in a functionless job. This long period was good enough for me to forget regular police work, which was my actual bread and butter. I therefore requested Mr. Bailey during one of his visits to Tuticorin, to transfer me out as a Station House Officer so that my professional skill could be constructively commissioned.

During the last week of March, I was posted to Kayattar police station on the National Highway, midway between Kovilpatti and Tirunelveli. I took over on April 4. The strength of the station was augmented after the advent of Mr. Bailey with nine constables.

The increased staff facilitated intensified police activity and it was possible to bring several listed criminals under our surveillance more frequently and effectively. The S. D. P. O. was Mr. Muhamad Ali of the Indian Police. He was a genial officer of unquestionable integrity. His penetrating mind and clear tongue, which he inherited from his Barrister father were topped by the elegant manners of a her-

editary millionaire which he undoubtedly was. The erstwhile Madras Police Force lost a gem of an officer when he volunteered for release in August, 1947.

There was an aerodrome purely intended for Military operations, three miles away. I was bound to visit the area every other day, and keep close liaison with defence and civilian officers stationed there. The defence wing consisted of British officers and other ranks, with their Indian counterparts belonging to the erstwhile Royal Air Force. On the civil side, there was an Executive Engineer and his staff.

In September that year, a case of arson was reported when a thatched shed within the aerodrome used by the Engineering department for storing electrical goods burnt down. A civilian employee, sleeping inside was incinerated The Commanding Officer of the R·A.F. suspected that firebugs had activated the arson. A case was registered.

A team of investigators headed by me, started our inquisition. We brought into focus the following propositions as the likely causes for the arson.

1. Sabotage by dismissed employees
2. Sabotage by enemy agents
3. Arson engineered by aerodrome contractors who could profit by the supply of new materials to replenish the stock burnt.
4. A case of accidental fire.

The shed was 30' x 20' and had a wooden door. It was stocked with an assortment of cumbustible knick-knacks like plywood, coir ropes and wooden pieces, besides electrical goods. None could assess the exact loss due to the destruction of documents inside, by the fire.

The suspicion against two dismissed employees was first taken up for probe. Their personal dossiers contained nothing of interest.

The Officer Commanding the unit had put me on to one of his top aides with whom I was closeted for about three hours. Certain files containing suspicions against a few residents of the villages on the periphery of the aerodrome come in for close scrutiny and discussion. Coffee and cigarettes from the officers' mess were made available in plenty, to step up the tempo of our discussions. The suspected persons had been repeatedly tresspassing into the aerodrome when their cattle grazing around, strayed into prohibited limits. In several cases, the offending animals were impounded, and heavy fines imposed on the owners. Apart from these, there was nothing against them. The Executive Engineer (Civil) could not be present during our discussion due to urgent preoccupations. His absence precluded matters of his concern and conception just as his presence implied them. We drained several pots of coffee to the last drop and packed the ash trays to capacity. Our discovery was nothing except that our mouths were full of our own teeth. There was no evidence to link likely enemy agents with the arson

A second round of discussions took place on the succeeding day, when the Executive Engineer reflected his department's line of thinking. However, no tangible result emerged. I, decided to explore further aspects of the investigation, independently.

A check up of the records of the police station yielded no results. Local enquiries shared the same fate. The Air Force authorities started entertaining serious doubts about my efficiency to solve the case. Indeed they thought about this loudly, in my presence. They made a request subsequently

to the Superintendent of Police to try another in the driver's seat of the investigating machinery, as they had lost all hopes of detection of the case. Their request was turned down, politely.

The theory that the contractors of the aerodrome could be behind the mischief was examined. Stremuous efforts in this direction ended up in improbabilities. They were men well known for their pronounced virtues. They were millionaires who pursued their profession honestly. I claimed that my investigation was thorough and the Air Force authorities contended that their disappointment with my performance was also thorough.

The government at the state and centre, besides the R A. F. headquarters at Delhi expressed their anxious concern over the delayed results of police investigation. I was flooded with memos seeking to ascertain the progress made in locating the saboteurs and bringing them to book. Many of these references which I answered boomeranged with more comments while fresh correspondence in painful abundance choked me with increasing vigour. On several occasions, I was on the verge of utter collapse.

It was highly gratifying that my staff had thrown their lot with mine. Their cheerful faces and steadfast loyalty was a powerful pick-me-up to my tired body and spirits. My lieutenants gave happy evidence of their devotion to duty which heartened me by its constancy and fervour. They were ready to bow to my orders at any time and do their utmost to further the cause of our objectives.

Each one of them did not hesitate to widen suo moto the scope of his pursuit if a new lead came into view. Loyalty and love were the dowries these policemen brought to the profession they married. They found so much fun in their work that they nee-

ded neither rest nor recreation to unwind themselves or replenish their lost energies. Diligent initiative is a professional virtue and an asset in a policeman, which merits ready appreciation.

The team was not idle. They deliberated and decided to institute enquiries at the village of nativity of the deceased for possible clues. The place was very distant and inaccessible. The seasonal rains had filled the path to the village with slush and mud. However, the dutiful detectives underwent the ordeal and discovered that the deceased had been chummy with two linemen working in an electric substation near the aerodrome. They were located and examined. They had visited the deceased at about 20 00 hrs on the night of occurrence, and found him dead drunk, incapable of taking care of himself, inside the ill-fated shed, lit by an improvised kerosene lamp. They warned him against the risk of keeping a naked flame inside a thatched cabin. The deceased who was in high spirits, scoffed at their admonition. It was quite apparent that the light inside had caused the absolute fire after the deceased started sleeping. Combustible articles that lay scattered all over the place must have helped a small flame to develop into a conflagration, fanned by strong winds. There was nothing concrete or even remotely vague to suggest the hand of a saboteur or anyone else in the incident. A strong indication that the fire was accidental ultimately emerged. It was a case of water-tight circumstantial evidence. I sent up my final report treating the case as an accident caused by the negligence of the deceased himself. This disposal was ratified by my senior officers, who too investigated the case.

My line of enquiry was assailed and the disposal of the case challenged by the Air Force authorities. They rejected my verdict and constituted a board of

enquiry to probe into the matter. However, I stuck to my guns.

The attitude of the Officer Commanding the Air Force Unit towards me. suffered a change. When I called on him on a subsequent occasion, his eyes were without the usual animation when he ordered the use and wont of hospitality.

A five member board of top Air Force Officials drawn from other centres commenced their enquiry. Even after about a week of protracted investigation, factual analysis, evidential synthesis, discussions and logic, the board failed to descry the cause of the fire or arrive at any conclusion worth the name. At long last, they sought my views in what they suspected to be "Sabotage by arson". After my testimony the board unanimously agreed with my findings and dropped further action in the matter.

The idea to gather random information at the village of the deceased, whatever be the outcome, was the product of the fertile brains of my assistants as stated already. This paid off. Their persevering efforts unravelled the enigma of this case of "Arson"

Chapter 34

The wages of Truth.

Early in November, 1943, when I was attending to routine work in my police station, a villager appeared before me. He had an important piece of information to convey. I ushered him into the neighbouring vacant Rest house where he confided to me that the accused wanted in a grave burglary of my police station had come to his house in the village. He was likely to go back into hiding after a couple of hours. The village was only about four kilometres sway.

The burglary had occurred about a month earlier. Entry was effected by unscrewing the hasp of the locked door of a house. A screw driver with a partially broken wooden handle was inadvertently left on the premises Its recovery did not mean anything initially. When efforts were made to identify the owner of the implement which bore the letters 'K.A.', we stumbled on a bonanza. The tiny tool belonged to a cycle repairer of a nearby village. He had sold it for a song to the accused, an old offender, who practised crime as a creed, and burglary as a fine art. We had been in hot pursuit of him, but the nimble footed shadow of of a man always kept one step ahead of us. He was a bred-in-the-bone criminal who knew how to dodge pursuit with the sinewy wariness of an alley cat.

To elude the Police he was ever on the move as he could not count on anybody's support for food and shelter. He adopted the cloak and dagger method of robbing his victims. He hobnobbed with them for a while and after suddenly flourishing his hidden dagger relieved them of their cash and other belongings. He lived on what he looted.

I mobilised my men. We were eight in all, six new recruits, the Head constable and myself. I offered my informant a constable's uniform. At this, he sighed softly as if puzzled slightly by what appeared to him as a "Greek gift". However he was persuaded to accept it and helped to slip into it. Besides shielding his identity, the uniform was intended to inspire and instill in him, a flattering illusion of oneness with the policemen, whose company he had to keep.

Succinctly, I briefed my party what they needed to know. I instructed my station writer to despatch a fast moving vehicle to be parked on the highway nearest to the village. As time was running out we did not wait for a transport. The hopes raised by the information on hand, drove us like bluebells in a strong wind.

When we reached the outskirts of the village, my Head Constable took me aside, and inportuned in fawning verbalism to permit him to stay back. He pleaded he was suffering from severe cold which was not even slightly perceptible. He contended that an uncontrolled sneeze or cough on his part, might alert and aid the wanted man to flee. His reasons and reasoning were as heavy as a mosquito's wing. A conscious suspension of disbelief, and the proverbial pinch of salt were necessary to accept his words. Had his indisposition been true, he could have made known his disability at the police station itself. The type of lie one utters and

its context provide clues to the truth. The H. C. had dipped his toe in the waters of risk which he found too cold. As the deep deposits of fear and cowardice within him which he could no longer contain surfaced, he decided to withdraw. There was no doubt that fear had taken him over and suffused the tissues of his mind and body. This policeman was like a professional swimmer, afraid to swim. Apparently eager to participate in the arrest operation, he was more eager to avoid the attendant risks. Cowardice was his bane. He bore out the following thought of EURIPIDES:

"Cowards do not count in battle:

They are there, but not in it".

I could do nothing but stare at my lieutenant with bright eyed amazement in the dim starlight around. I deemed it preposterous to rely on a flighty man, who would shy away at the crucial moment, multiplying the risks of others. Fully sensing that he would never subdue his nervous disinclination to face any danger I permitted him to have his own way. He thanked me in a quavering, voice, spun on his heels, and disappeared into the darkness. As we went ahead towards our target house, some stray dogs in the fields whined, but the howling winds devoured all sounds. The discordant note struck by the H. C's last minute decision to back out, ditched the morale of my young constables, who developed cold feet. What the youths deserved was peppering, which the time, place and occasion, did not warrant. In such a context, I believed that only prudence and silence and not audacity and drive could keep my men together. I was right. They remained together. I was left alone to face the stark danger.

We walked slowly stalking over with pauses now and then, to ensure that what we heard was

only the soughing of the wind through the trees. A little farther away, a group of persons crossed the fields that lay in our vicinity. They were tripping towards a nearby village. Close at hand, there was a big temple in desuetude We quickly aberrated our course and faded into the dark shadows inside the corridors and corners of the wornout edifice, where we cooled our heels. The atmosphere there was pleasant with the air loaded with the aromatic burden of flowers and foliage around.

After the pedestrians had disappeared, we headed towards the cluster of houses. The pattern and lay-out of the village was complex and confusing. Streets, lanes and blocks of houses were related more perhaps to family needs, functional requirements and financial restraints, than the demand of neat geometry.

We reached our target-house and surrounded it. At strategic points, I posted my men. Two constables were briefed to be on my heels with all alertness to rescue me from possible throes of danger or death They vowed to do the needful.

I drew my loaded revolver from the holster, and edged in through the open entrance of the compound wall of the house with wary steps. I saw the criminal sitting on the front verandah on his haunches. His head, facing downwards was resting on his bent knees held in position by his arms wrapped around them. The first summons to my attention clearly showed my closeness to absolute danger. Between his feet rested his shining dagger I was sure he had not seen me, for he neither moved nor tried to do so. Nevertheless I became tense. I veered my head slightly sideways to ensure that my helpers were behind, but alas there was none ! No doubt I had a loaded revolver and could easily despatch a bullet into the body of the man in case I sensed dan-

ger. The seeds of courage sown during moments of supreme peril yield instant fruits. My bravado asserted itself and helped to bring into play reserves of my nervous force which I never knew I possessed. Inching forward quietly, I pointed my weapon towards him and shouted "Hands up or die" at the top of my voice. Startled by the incredulity of the sombre danger of the fire arm, that faced him within inches, he screamed:

"I surrender, I surrender, By God! Don't kill me". He tried to rise with his hands raised above his head, but his knees buckled, and he fell prostrate at my feet. On hearing the cries of surrender, my "brave" men, a couple of them, rushed in. Our captive was strongly smelling sweat. He was badly shaken; while my men helped him to his feet, my hands reached his. They were icy cold. I fettered them. We seized his dagger, searched his person and house, and dog-trotted to our expected transport. It was by a sudden quirk of fate, that the cloak and dagger man was apprehended with his cloak open and dagger down.

From the moment we knew about the whereabouts of the absconder till he was actually arrested the sequence of events was a cliff-hanger for the following reasons:-

1. Though the information of his surprise presence in his house was reliable, I had serious doubts if he would stay on there till we reached the place. There was no fast vehicle to transport us immediately and quickly.

2. The last minute turnabout of my H.C. for reasons lighter than air lowered the morale of my constabulary whose brave support I needed to accomplish the dangerous and difficult task.

3. I could hope for constancy in the wind rather

than cooperation from the villagers to capture one among them.

As we reached the highway, my Head constable jumped out of a parked motor vehicle which had obviously been sent by my station writer who complied with my instructions. Though his contribution towards the arrest of the criminal was ethereal, the Head constable who lauded my courage tried to impress on us that he had prayed for our safety and success. Little did he know the great truth that the hands that help are holier than the lips that pray.

We piled into the vehicle and packed ourselves like boxed match sticks and drove to the police station. It should be said to the credit of my Head constable that he had a fine flair for gardening. His genius found expression in the open patio skirting the police station. He had remarkable horticultural skill for design, display and colour. He was rightly proud of his "green thumb". This commendable skill sharply contrasted with his professional output. As a policeman, his finished products were like suits, basted together for the first trial. Too long here, or too short there, and loose or tight at other places.

The whole drama of the unique arrest of the criminal could be compared to a theatrical piece of one Act without any action, and one Scene with little to be seen. The command and the surrender were of a military pattern, instantaneous and spontaneous.

I considered the poltroonery of my Head Constable, who ducked from danger, and flew to his freedom, to be of lesser gravity than the perfidy of the twin constables who falsified their avouchment of my safety. If only courage had abandoned me at the crucial moment, or the fire arm failed or slipped from my hands, I would have become a sure harvest for

the hungry weapon of the desperado. My experience proved that one courageous and honest man is better than a truckload of pussyfooters.

After reaching the station, we interrogated our "catch ". To our great surprise he started confessing. He prefaced his statement with an expression of deep gratitude to the entire police party for treating him with kindness. He was particularly indebted to me for sparing his life.

"No armed police officer "he said," in such a context would miss the opportunity of killing the wanted man and cornering glory ".

He narrated with much circumstance, the case of shooting to death of a warrantee by one of my predecessors,a few years earlier in the same village. The absconder was said to have been secured alive; but the S.H.O. wanted credit of the highest order. That could not be achieved without his revolver spitting out death, to the captive.

The ill-fated man was reportedly taken to a lonely place, bound hand and foot and shot dead at point blank range. A mock attack was staged in which the deceased " armed with a sword " had attempted to kill the police officer, who shot him dead, through his head.

While the official version justified the killing, the unofficial one described the incident as a cold-blooded murder. Whether the S.H O. served with his conscience the cause of justice and fair play, or abetted with his head efforts to advance his career, remained a topic which the public chewed, for long.

After a spirited narration of the above story, our captive offered one of his legs to be shot below the knee if that would help any of us to get a gallantry award. Declining his offer, I thanked him

for his concern and emphasised that the greatest concession that could benefit us, was his fullest confession. He obliged.

He had an appalling squint. When he looked straight at you, you did not know where you were, let alone what he was looking at. It was lucky I thought, we got him in the night. Had ours been a daylight encounter, certainly he would have stolen an advantage over us, either in a counter -attack, or effecting his escape. He was a thin built and wiry man of about 5 feet eight inches, with big eyes, broad forehead and frizzled hair. His complexion was the very quintessence of blackness. His beard of uneven lengths appeared as though goats had nibbled at the missing ones.

He made a clean breast of all the crimes he had committed, ever since he was released from jail after his last conviction. His confessional statement which covered several pages of manuscript, dealt with three cases of burglary and one of theft. The next day he was produced before the Magistrate who granted three days of police custody, to effect recoveries of properties about the disposal of which he had confessed.

We succeeded in retrieving stolen wealth worth about Rs. 2000/-. Investigations were completed and in all cases he was indicted, and convicted.

A reward to a Police Officer is admissible when he effects an arrest under exceptionally risky circumstances, or displays remarkable detective or persevering talent that rises above the normal run of routine. Apprehension of an armed desperado, who surrenders without resistance, and recoveries on confessions are out of bounds for the operation of rewards or recognitions. Applying these yardsticks it was quite positive that none of us was eligible for

a reward. The instant apprehension of the man was like running a hot knife through butter.

In my report I dealt with the whole story of the case, and the part played by those who brought about the absconder's arrest. I justified a monetary reward for our informant, and added specifically that the rest of us had done no more than our duty.

We were surprised when we received orders granting rewards to everyone of us,in addition to the informiant. Each of my men got Rs. 15/ and my informaint Rs 50/. I received a''Good Service Entry''. Our S. P., who read through the facts in the case diary and the rewardroll,based his orders on two grounds: (1)the prompt action taken by the police which facilitated the arrest in record time, and (2) the forthright presentation of the story of the arrest without surrounding mole hills of circumstance with mountains of drama. Mr. Bailey's hands that scribbled the orders bestowing on us giltedged benefits, had acted only in accordance with the stirrings of his heart, and mind which he had applied in full, to study every inch of the entire story, in depth. Our professional satisfaction apart, the rewards generated in us immense psychic happiness.

A couple of months later, I received a circular from the District Police Office, calling for nominations of policemen with legible handwriting and talent for office work. I recommended my Head constable as he filled the bill for the job. He was happy since his new desk entailed peace of mind and involved no risk. His very continuance on the strength of the police station was a weakness. He was as useful as a pistol packed at the bottom of one's box when robbers stage a sudden attack.

At this Police station, I shielded and sheltered a constable for nearly two years from being eased out

of service. He was Somasundaram Pillai with district No. 1220. He had been a victim of some disease which had reduced him to skin and bone. His back was arched forward and his head led his body when he walked. His painful chincough overtook his pitiful paces. His retirement would have spelt his fiscal doom.

I saw to it that he was kept out of the view of all the senior officers by assigning duties which held him within the confines of oblivion. This was a difficult exercise and on several occasions I invited adverse comments. My only object was to prolong his official life as much as he needed to sort out his private affairs. When I left the Station on transfer, Somasundaram proceeded on furlough leave for 28 months (permissible during the British regime) and retired thereafter. No doubt he could not withstand the rigorous duties of a policeman. The favour I extended to him was humanitarian, though it cut the corners of justice and fair play.

Chapter 35

Transfer of Mr. Bailey

Mr. Bailey was transferred to Delhi as Deputy Director of the Intelligence Bureau towards the end of March, 1944. Being never a stickler for tradition, he was an officer of intuitive talents, independent thinking, and innovative ideas. Elsewhere I have discussed the improvements he brought about as principal of the Police Training School at Vellore, and as Superintendent of Police in Tirunelveli District. Public good and police welfare were the apogees of his aims. He was frank and outspoken. He never committed or ommitted any act, that brought distress or disadvantage to anyone, directly or indirectly. His orders on punishments were models on the subject. He held the scales of justice personally, evenly. He was a veritable steam engine with a hundred horse power, reaching out into farflung areas and distant outposts of the mini British Empire, which he administered dutifully. He saw things for himself, enquired himself, and convinced himself. No one could, therefore, dare to lead him up the garden path. His upright behaviour, and downright justice, earned for him not only the loyalty, but the love as well,of those who had their lots cast with him. Though he exercised his authority fully, he was never authoritarian. Usually affable, but sometimes brusque Mr. Bailey appeared to have the manner of

a man who liked doing things his own way. In reality, he was otherwise, being amenable to reason and open to conviction. He never stood by anything he had done, as the very thing that ought to have been done. An obvious case in point was his order granting an accelerated grade promotion to a Sub-Inspector. When he learnt later that those superseded were equal in calibre and fibre to the promotee and that justice had failed, he revoked his order.

Mr. Bailey did not belong to the hierarchy of officers who believed and behaved that they should only be asked, and never told about anything concerning their work. He was eager to listen to every one, and more so to learn from everyone. He had an inquiring intellect which penetrated into the farthest recesses of the subject discussed, retaining whatever it discovered. Always wide awake and alert for anything new and better, he was a trail blazer for innovations. He had the ideal perspective to balance the imperatives of the needs of the personnel, and requirements of the profession. His departmental orders accorded with the spirit of "Coffee-pot-theory". The essence of all benefits percolated and reached everyone down to the lowest rank. Partiality never biased his conduct. He rewarded and punished with the least dimunition. He had the unerring instinct for an unbending stand at the right context. He never yielded to those who tried to cavil at transfer orders.

During his meetings with police officers, he jumped from one topic to another with agility and speed. Only a few were able to catch up, while others lagged behind. Mr. Bailey never encouraged anyone who mechanically clutched at his coat tails, but admired those who held opposing views for the courage of their convictions. Undoubtedly, he did not believe in the principle of cognitive qalance which implies that one likes only those who

share his views and think the way he chooses. Into everything he did he threw himself with cheerfulness, energy and amenity.

In April, 1944 Mr. E.S. Treasure, I.P., took over as Superintendent of Police of the district. He was a comparatively young officer with hardly a decade of service. The district was not new to him since he had served as Assistant Superintendent of Police in Tuticorin from 1936 to 1939. Within the brief sojourn of less than a year,he did not have the time to plan out and accomplish changes he might have considered best.He introduced the system of "Mass Village Visits"by police officers in strength especially to places which had remained neglected pockets of police administration and contact.

The Mass visits aimed at creating a healthy and helpful understanding between the isolated villagers and the Police by abolishing the gap created by rank officialdom and Physical distances. On these occasions, Eve-teasers, miscreants, Bad characters, factious elements and criminals were warned to behave themselves and their personalia gathered up to date. Enquiries to unearth unreported crime received unique priority.

MR Treasure was a reserved and retiring type of bachelor who remained busy mostly at his desk. He was soft spoken, with an academic demeanour. Conscious of the welfare of his staff he studied and solved their problems. Punishments were far and few between. He was one, who would rather light candles, than blame the darkness. His notes of inspections and instructions were clear, well defined and intelligible. However he did not prefer the urbane elan of Mr. Bailey in the choice of words and phrases. A routine shuffle transferred Mr. Treasure. Thereafter the district saw a succession of officiating Superintendents, who were frequently moved out.

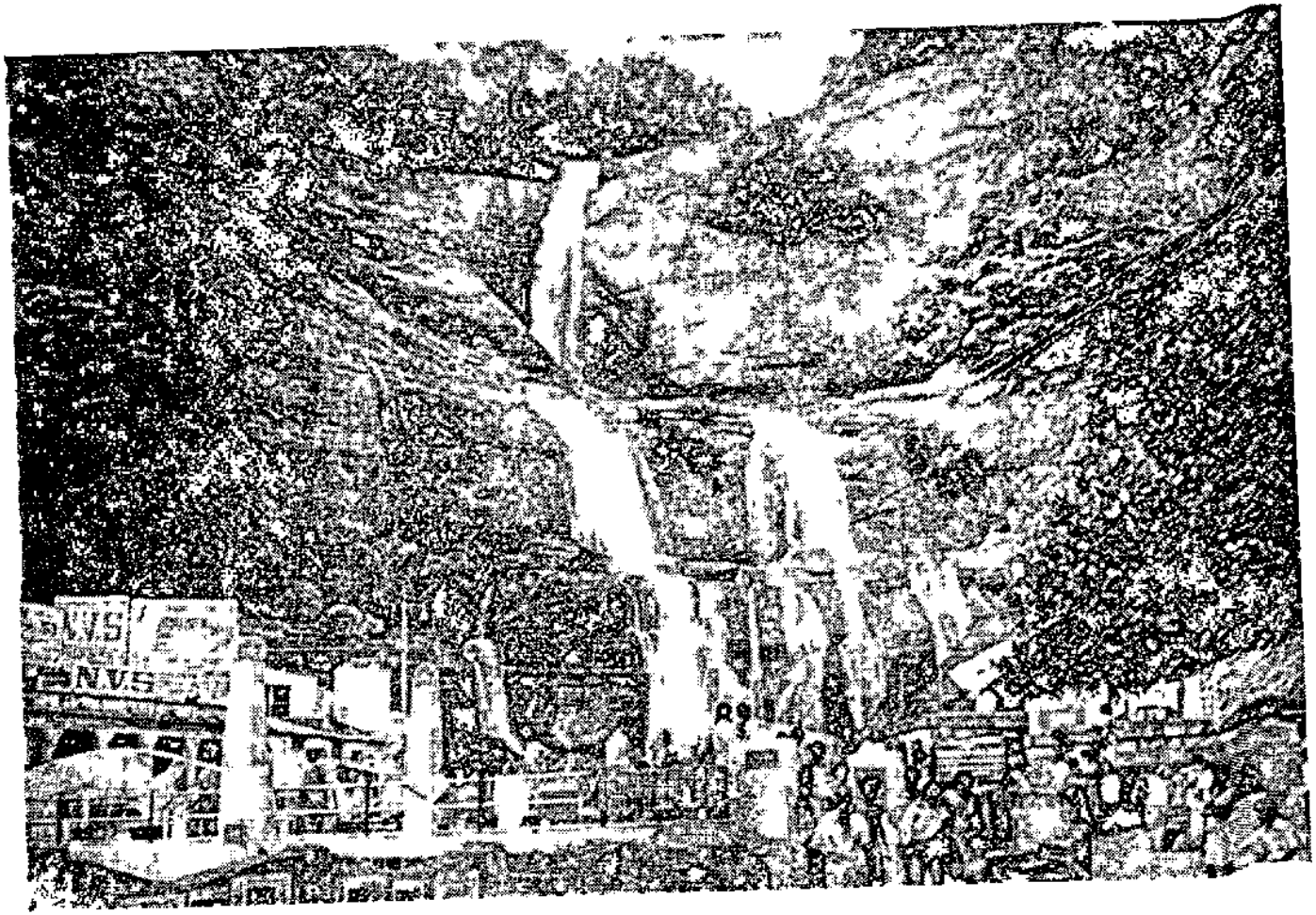
Chapter 36

Darkness at Noon

On a routine transfer, I took over charge of Tenkasi police station during the first week of May, 1945. The famous waterfalls at Courtallam about three miles from the Police Station, attracts visitors and tourists during the season from June to August every year. The peak of influx of people, who bathe in the falls is during the months of June and July. The water is said to have therapeutic effects and this belief attracts vast crowds, both ill and well.

Senior government officials, heads of nearby States and other V.I.Ps. are usually among the visitors. Even today the police have an extra burden to shoulder, which they accomplish with courtesy, despite difficulties.

The S.D.P.O. unfortunately developed a prejudice against me as he wanted a man of his choice in my place. His aim was to drive me out into the wilderness. My sin was that I could not persuade him to like me. Whenever I called on him in the context of official duties, he maintained radio silence, choosing to peer down the green fairways of indifference. If he talked, invariably he did so in double-Dutch. I was faced with a war of nerves involving constant tension. At the noon of my career, dark



Water Falls at Courtallam.

clouds hovered over me. The attitude of the Inspector was neither helpful nor harmful.

Dismissing happiness and comfort with authoritative detachment, I worked like a cistercian monk for whom the day begins at 03.45 hours. Despite this, I was falling steeply from the estimation of the S.D.P.O. The following were the signals :-

1 In a report about me, he wrote "He does not know his work , He has to be put up in the way" His object was to precipitate the inference that I was more a liability than an asset to the Police Force.

2. My case diaries and other papers became chosen targets of attack, betraying sincere efforts to cook my goose. He withstood my views vehemently.

3. In a case where one of my Head Constables had bungled, he involved me in the mess, and got me severely punished, even though I was absent from my headquarters.

I was thus assigned to areas where the twilight of unreason and unpleasant realities reigned supreme. With a sullen superior and capricious subordinates, my future was anything but safe. I felt like the proverbial sheep being led to its slaughter. I decided to get out. On a substantial plaint, I sued for an immediate transfer, and succeeded.

On receipt of orders posting me to Ottapidaram, I left Tenkasi on the wings of the wind like an emancipist, heading into his world of freedom. That night though bedded down on a soft matress, I remained

awake. I tossed, rolled and tried every kind of posture to court sleep. I sought out even the cold corners of my bed in vain. I also curled up and pulled my pillows over my head. Nothing worked. My sleeplessness was due to extreme happiness. At every beat, my heart leapt with joy. It was a memorable night. I proved the hard fact that men are often motivated not by what they want, but by what they want to escape from.

Chapter 37

Daylight at Midnight

Located in an out of the way village, Ottapidaram was a very light charge. When I took over, there was no case pending investigation. To me, life was invitingly tranquil. For a few days, deeming it as a well earned period of rest after a spell of trouble and tension, I enjoyed absolute peace of mind. Thereafter, I busied myself with visiting villages, contacting the people, checking ex-convicts and history-sheeters. The Inspector and the S.D.P.O were new officers. Both were sympathetic and helpful.

The main tasks of a Station House Officer are prevention, and detection of crime. While both are commendable, prevention is viewed on a higher plane of appreciation, than detection. In preventing crime, the police take action in good time, and display notable foresight into human conduct in the areas where trouble or activities of criminals exist or are expected. All policemen believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of detection.

The station limits included a long sea coast on its eastern border, now ceded to a new police Station at Kulathoor. There were reports of illicit emigrants embarking in country boats from these shores to Sri Lanka, (then known as Ceylon) for employment. Unskilled labour in that country was paid

at a premium when the wages in India were not sufficient even to feebly palliate the grinding poverty from which many suffered.

Our state and Central governments were seriously exercised over these offences, which were not conducive to healthy relations with a close and friendly neighbour. Local agents who aided and abetted these illegal acts, made many a fast rupee in the process These persons had their own network of informants to spy on the movements of the police, whose efforts to stem the tide of the illicit emigration were anything but satisfactory.

A party of my policemen while patrolling the sea coast around midnight, a fortnight after I took over, spotted a gang of prospective emigrants, about to leave the shores of India in a country boat. They were all arrested with their belongings. They numbered eleven. The boat was seized, but the boat men escaped Never before had there been such a crowning effort. The battle for salvation against starvation came to an abrupt end, for the hapless lot. Sri Lanka for them turned out to be police custody. This haul by my policemen was the dawn of daylight in my officially bleak period, dark as midnight.

A case was registered and the offenders were remanded to custody. Investigation showed that illicit taxis transported the illicit emigrants to chosen points of embarkation in illicit country boats.

There were two methods of dealing with the offenders. The first one was to charge them under the provisions of the Indian Emigration Act and secure convictions; the second to put them up under the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code for taking stealthy precautions to commit a cognizable crime. In the latter event, if they were bound over on guarantees of good conduct, a record statistics of eleven cases of much appreciated preventive action could be built up. Administrative orders in

force envisaged the prior approval of the trial magistrate, for action under the preventive sections of law. The Magistrate initially sceptically cocked his eye brow, but signalled the green light for the intended police action, after a short deliberation. All the eleven illicit emigrants were bound over on guarantees of good conduct.

A week later my Head Constable in charge of the Out Post reported a case of affray in a public place involving eighteen persons. I conducted the usual verification and charged all the accused under Section 160 of the Indian Penal Code. As they belonged to two groups which did not see eye to eye with each other, breach of peace was imminent. In the charge-sheet, therefore, I incorporated a rider, requesting the First Class Magistrate trying the case to bind over the accused under Section 106 Criminal Procedure Code, to keep peace for a year, in case they were found guilty. The police who had a strong case with unassailable evidence were able to bring home the guilt in respect of all those charged Both groups were convicted to pay a fine of Rs. 50/-each and bound over as desired by the prosecution. I was delighted since there was a clear progression in the work turned out by my staff, like the steps on a stairway one ascends.

As far as possible, I endeavoured to stay close to statistics that did me credit. To bend the rising curve of crime and raise the falling figures of preventive action, I launched my best skill. The patterns adopted wove like clouds of smoke in the air to make crime figures jiggle and dance successfully around the columns of the statistical table. My effort to bring the eleven cases of attempt at illicit emigration under the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code is an instance in point.

The success of a policeman is measured largely in terms of professional crime detected and criminals convicted, by courts of law. Never did I engineer false cases or allow my subordinates to do so. Whenever an innocent person appeared to be involved, I ordered dropping of action against him.

A couple of months after I took over, the S.D P.O. paid a surprise visit to my police station, when fortunately I was present. He went round the premises and was happy to note that the whole place was kept absolutely tidy. The available men were in uniform and their presence accounted for. The arms and ammunition were properly secured. The cash book was up to date and cash balance correct. The visiting officer was mightily inpressed with what all he saw and discovered for himself. Two burglaries and one theft reported after my advent had ended in conviction. A few absconding warrantees were rounded up and their cases were sub judice.

Earlier, at my previous police station at Tenkasi, I was confined to cold regions of incompetency and boredom from where I found myself suddenly transposed to Ottapidaram, which for me turned out to be a place of warmth, congeniality and success under a different officialdom. I am sure, my experience must have been shared by many in identical or worse situations The Hebrew proverb "A change of place is a change of luck" proved most true in my case. The change took me out of myself, opened up fresh horizons and introduced me to new vistas of ideals and realities. My sojourn here, though brief, was one of absolute sunshine and peace, not repeated in the later years of my career. I wore diginity as a good garment and happiness as my headgear.

Chapter 38

At the District Headquarters

Early in April, 1946, I was surprised to learn of my likely posting as S.H.O. to the first police station of the district at its headquarters at Palayamkottai then designated as B-1. For this place, usually, only the best talent was chosen. Apparently the S.P had formed an inflated impression about my calibre. By mid April I received orders. I was happy. I looked forward to make my track in top official surroundings. Luckily, if my talents came into full flowering, I hoped that my professional prospects would blossom. I took charge on April 24.

I called on the Inspector and the S.D.P.O. who gave me the required briefing. The S.P., whom I had never met, was on tour.

There were no bifurcations as Crime, Law and Order or Traffic. All these were under the supervision and control of the Station House Officer. A heavy work load had to be hauled every day, and on many occasions with flurry and fidget.

I should credit my Station Writer Ramakrishnan. HC 1125 (Since retired as a Sub-inspector of Police) for fostering the idea on me to study the instructions issued by the new S.P. for the guidance of all Station House Officers. I digested the entire file. I noted in these, a great accent, on curbing the offences of cyclists riding without lights, quite rampant in town areas. Next in order of priority was the need to book unscrupulous traders who

used false weights and measures to earn easy money, at the cost of gullible customers.

I conducted surprise raids on several shops in the town and detected fifty seven cases of false weights and measures. Traps for cyclists without lights were organised, and thirty six persons were brought to book. I equipped myself with the background of professional crime of my limits in the past, as well as cases pending investigation and trial.

A week later, dressed in an impeccably laundered uniform, I called on the S.P.. I clicked my heels, saluted and stood ram-rod straight, without even batting my eye-lids. His eagle eye swept over and touched me as close as my under shirt. He then started talking;

S.P. : When did you take over ?
Self : On the 24th. Sir.
S.P. : I have specially selected you for the headquarters as I was told by your previous S.D.P.O., that you are a good worker.

Self : I am thankful for this kindness
S.P. : This is not kindness. I am trying to put the right man at the right place.

Eh..... I find that in your limits hundreds of cyclists travel at nights without lights, and without any fear of authority. I want you to organise special squads to put down this gross violation of law. Further, you have to visit all the shops in the bazaar and check their weights and measures, to ensure that greedy traders do not make money at the cost of the public. I am sure you know this is the best way of winning public confidence. I will be closely watching your Performance. Try to justify your posting to number one police station of the district.

Self : I am grateful for these instructions; I have made a good beginning.

S.P. : What do you mean?

Self : During the past few days I have charge-sheeted thirty six cases of cyclists without lights.

S.P. : Very good.

Self : I have also detected fifty seven cases of false weights and measures. To bring the offenders to justice, I am awaiting the report of the Inspector of Weights and measures.

S.P. : Excellent. Please continue your good work.

Self : Certainly Sir.

S.P. : Thank you. You can go.

After the parting salute, I walked out. My interview with the S.P. filled me with sentiments of happy pride.

A few months later when my Inspector proceeded on a week's leave, I was ordered to hold charge of his office, ad interim. In one of the delayed case diaries of a sub-inspector I made the following comments :

" Delay is a stubborn disease :

The earlier you cure yourself, the better "

This record was sent for perusal to the S.D.P.O. He underlined my comments and added a side-note :

" Fine ! Fine !
This is just like one having a hunch-backed uncle, mocking at another, who has a cross-eyed aunt "

The implication was significant. I was a chronic delayer of papers, and hence least qualified to comment on the delay of others. Thanks to the well-meaning remarks of the S.D.P.O., I got over the habit of delay with a determination.

Chapter 39

A Murder for Gain

On July 18, I received a telephonic message from someone who refused to be identified, that a woman and her child were poisoned in their house, opposite to the main entrance of the District police office.

I rushed to the place with a couple of my men. A small crowd of people in front of the scene house, facilitated its easy identification. On entering the one room tenement, I found a middle aged woman, lying flat on her bed. Seeing me, she tried to rise. but yelled with pain and slumped. Her child was lying unconscious Vomit littered the room.

I rushed the two victims to the Government Hospital, where the doctors promptly attended on them The woman was saved, but the child died, despite best medical aid. I recorded a statement from the surviving victim, incorporating all details of the occurrence.

She was alone in her house with her son aged two years. High temperature had confined her to bed. Her husband had gone out for work. At about noon she answered a door knock, when an old woman of about 65 years entered. Finding her ill,

the visitor offered a cure. She brought a bottle of soda from a nearby shop and mixing some powder in it, administered the drink to the sick woman. The child was also given a sip or two of the same. Within minutes, she was afflicted with vertigo. Later, on opening her eyes, she spewed. Her son was unconscious. She discovered that the fake physician had gone, and so had her genuine gold ear ornaments too. Her cries attracted neighbours, One of them informed the police on telephone.

I held the inquest over the body of the child after which, it was handed over to the Medical Officer – in – charge, for autopsy, with a request to preserve the viscera for chemical analysis.

I rushed back to the scene house which was guarded by one of my men till my arrival. After a careful search. I seized two brass tumblers with stains, and collected other traces of evidence under a panchayatnama signed by witnesses present.

Investigation revealed that the accused woman was frail and feeble slightly stooping and loudly whooping when she walked and talked. Her painful battle for breath would make even a cruel heart,go pit–(a) pat. Clearly, her pulmonary organs were in need of repair. She wore a red coloured saree with black stripes Two of her upper incisors were missing. The vendor next door confirmed the description of the woman, and her purchase of a bottle of soda from him. He too was confident of identifying her. The striking element in the crime was the nerve with which the murderess perpetrated it. She was calm as still water, and cool as the moon till she reached the noon of her achievement.

The Ornaments: These were made of solid gold. Their cost was estimated around Rs.250/-according

the prevailing price of yellow metal those days. The smith who made them affirmed that his registers testified to the details of his handicraft. He was quite sure that he could identify them.

The victim stated that her left ear ornament bore the teeth marks of her two year old son who playfully used to bite it whenever she carried him on her left shoulder.

I initiated and pursued intense efforts to identify and apprehend the criminal by commissioning the best detectives among my staff Every technique in the professional book was explored and exploited. There was no breakthrough. Being the seniormost sub-inspector, I summoned the other sub-inspectors of the circle and in a protracted conference tried to evolve a suitable strategy to solve the case. In our electrified deliberations, during which there was a free meeting and mixing of minds, every one generated heat, though none could shed any light, to solve the crime. With every suggestion. we started with the head of an elephant but ended with the tail of a mouse. We felt there was nothing else to be done. We justified the infamous definition of the term 'conference'- An assembly of persons who individually can do nothing, but could also meet and decide that nothing could be done."

A couple of weeks later,the last British Governor of Madras, Sir Archibald Nye toured our district. During his visit to Palayamkottai, I was on bandobust duty near the local Railway level crossing. I had occupied a point of vantage from where I could command an uninterrupted view of all men under my charge. A few minutes before the car of the Governor was due to pass, a small news-sheet of four pages printed locally flew across the road, Quickly retrieving it, I signalled to the owner to collect it

from me later. After the pilot car followed by the Governor's, passed my area of duty, I withdrew with my men. I forgot about the news-sheet which I had slipped into my pocket. None came forward to claim it,

At my police station, I gave the news sheet a cursory glance. My eyes flickered with eagerness when I saw a news - item captioned " Alleged poisoning: Woman arrested ". I devoured the whole column which stated as follows :

> "An old woman recently employed as a cook by a business man in Tiruchendur was reported to have mixed poison in the food she prepared. Those who consumed the food were treated at the local hospital, for symptoms of food poisoning. The woman was arrested and remanded to custody. The police who registered a case, are investigating into the matter "

This news which threw a chink of light, illuminating a worthwhile orbit of investigation in my case, stimulated me like an early morning cup of coffee. I decided to invest all my professional talents in this opportunity.

I reached my Inspector on telephone and conveyed the information. I sought his permission to leave headquarters to examine the complicity of the woman, in my station case of poisoning. He assented readily, and wished me good luck. As I was about to leave, the Inspector informed me that he had decided to look into the matter himself, in view of the gravity of the crime and desired that I accompany him in his car to Tiruchendur. We reached the place in the afternoon and examined the prisoner in the sub-jail, with the permission of the jail authorities.

She was the very picture of the description embodied in the F.I.R. of our case. Coughing frequently, breathing heavily and talking haltingly, she sported a saree of identical specification with the one on our record. The crowning discovery we made was the ear ornaments she was wearing, a graphic account of which, was faithfully and flawlessly similar to those which were stolen. She remained tight-lipped about the crime with which we confronted her, though her eyes were cold, malignant and telltale.

At our request, the local Magistrate seized the ornaments from the accused and kept them in custody. The next day two identity parades were held by the Magistrate during which the accused was identified, by the complainant and vendor. The victim and the goldsmith who made the ornaments, identified them. The teeth marks of the deceased child were found on the left ear ornament of the victim. This had been earlier reported in the case diary during investigation. This factor was the main plank of the prosecution story which established the complicity of the accused beyond doubt in the crime, besides affording foolproof indentification for the lost properties.

The Chemical Examiner discovered datura poison in the viscera of the child, the vomit of his mother and the stains on two brass tumblers.

We got the prisoner lodged in the Tiruchendur Jail, transferred to our sub-jail, to facilitate trial. The escort party and their charge travelled in a bus which had a break-down enroute. All of them arrived at nightfall and the woman in custody had perforce to be kept in our station lock-up for the night.

We availed of this occasion to interrogate her further. She had remained till then tongue-tied, tight-tipped and lock-jawed. To break her stony silence,

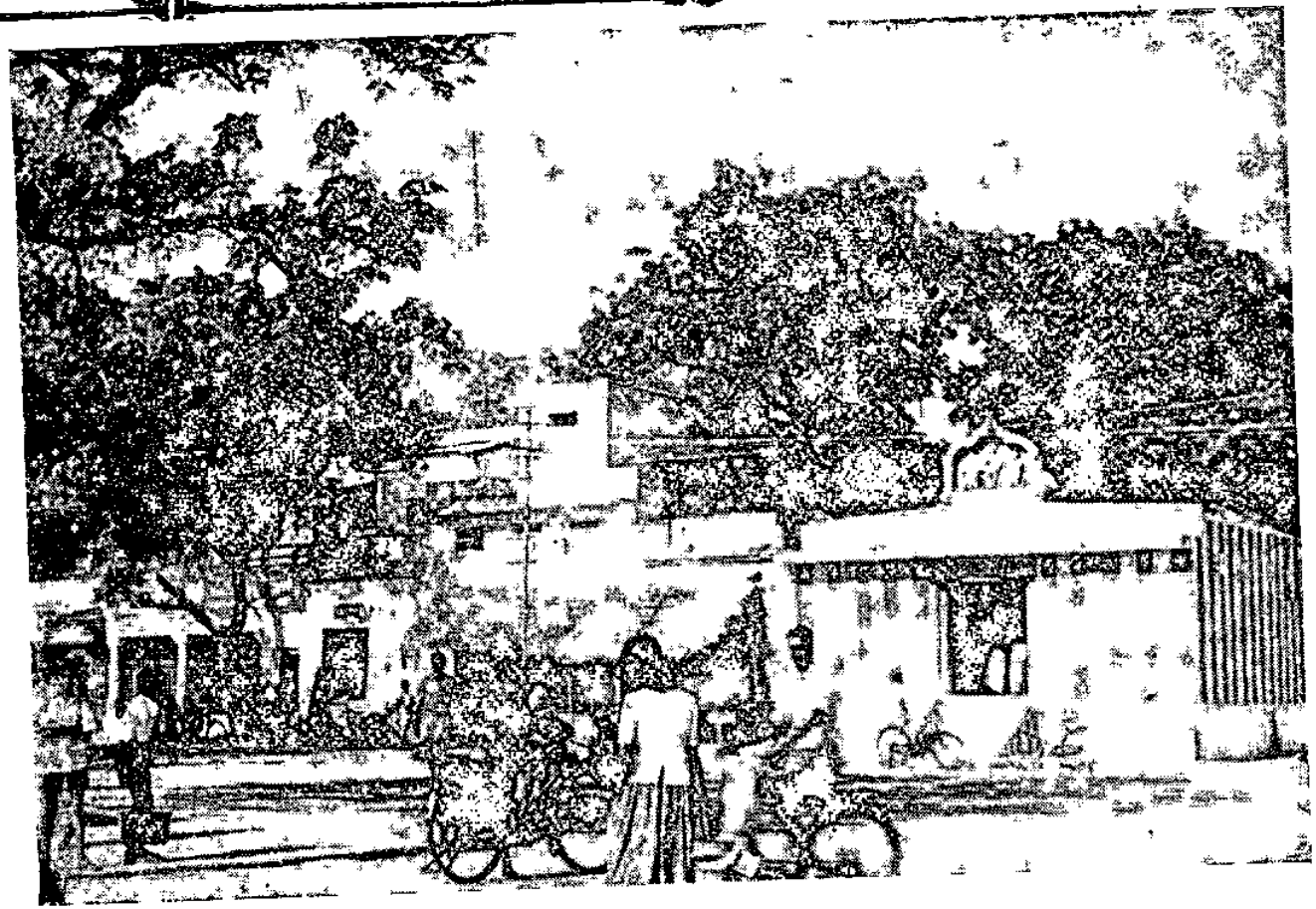
we devised a stratagem. At the suggestion of a hard-bitten assistant of mine who had barely a month to go, for his superannuation, a plan was conceived. This was to introduce a stool-pigeon to share the cell in the night with the woman to induce her to articulate. A retired female jail warder with time on her hands, eager to help us, was confined in the same lock-up in the guise of an accused in a case of theft. This was the best rose water treatment that could be devised to tackle the old woman of delicate health.

During the night when the whole town was sleeping, the two women behind the bars in the station were talking. Despite the admission of guilt by the stool-pigeon who tried her best to persuade her companion in the cell to talk about the murder, nothing of interest emerged. The only information she divulged was about her cousin owning a fire-wood shop in the local market street. This titbit was pursued and the man traced. He stated that the accused was his relation and that she had tried to meet him but he was out of station. It was about noon on a cloudy day, and equiries revealed that it was the very day on which the crime in question was committed. The visit of the accused was corroborated by the neighbours of her cousin. This locality lay close to the scene of crime. Thus a strong link in the chain of evidence which brought both the crime and criminal, very close to each other, was forged.

The accused was charged under Sections 302 and 379 I.P.C. (murder and theft). The British Sessions Judge Mr. J.E.Maher. I.C.S., sentenced her to three years R.I. under Section 304 I.P.C.(culpable homicide not amounting to murder) besides one year under section 379 I.P.C. The Judge spoke saidly while delivering the judgment, which was a

mixture of justice, mercy and medicine. He had considered the state of health of the accused which was anything but encouraging and specified adequate medical attention during her imprisonment.

That an important case of murder could be solved by a fortuitous discovery of information published in a newspaper sounds as strange as it is true. My initiative was commended and recognised. The S.P. circularised all S.H.Os. to study crime briefs in the press, verify and pursue useful clues to their logical ends. Files for press clippings were ordered to be opened and maintained in all police stations in the district.



On the right is the shrine of Lord Subramanya The one on the left is that of Lord Ganesh. On the top is the Old Palayamkottai Police Station.

Chapter 40

The Independence Day

Towards beginning of July 1947, my Inspector was transferred. I was temporarily appointed to officiate as Inspector. The Deputy Superintendent of police was a new officer (Mr. T. T, P. Abdullah). He is currently the Indian Ambassador in Saudi Arabia. He rose to the post of Director - General of police, Tamil Nadu in June 1980. After his retirement in July 1981, he took up the diplomatic assignment of Ambassador. With his commanding height, he is dignity, personified.

The Tirunelveli Town Circle had four police stations, namely, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli Bridge, Tirunelveli Town and Melapalayam. On the eve of the Independence, most of the departmental and district heads in the State were shuffled about like Kings and Queens in a pack of cards. Both the Collector and District Superintendent of police were new officials, at Tirunelveli. They were Messers Ghulam Mohamed and Dhanarajlu Naidu.

The grant of Independence to India stirred every Indian to a dizzy pitch. Grand celebrations were planned at the headquarters in Tirunelveli. A celebration on a minor scale was on the cards,

at Melapalayam. At the former place, the Collector was to unfurl the National flag and address a public meeting.

At 08.00 hrs. on the historic day, I visited Melapalayam, where a procession of the followers of a major political party covering all the main streets of the town was planned. The S. H. O. here had methodised earlier, all police duties, and patterned them to suit foreseeable needs. Without any explanation either by word of mouth, or in black and white, the comprehensive blue print of police duties commended itself to all senior officers, who found it both workable and worthwhile.

At 08.30 hrs. Mr. Abdullah arrived. I accompanied him around the town. Flags and festoons fluttered triumphantly on private and public buildings. Gaudily embellished facades adorned almost every street, reflecting the joyous optimism and majesty of a new born nation. A quiet air of simple elegance hung everywhere. Even a shadow of a suspicion of trouble anywhere was beyond all calculations.

Since peace in this area was taken for granted, Mr. Abdullah directed me to proceed to the venue of the Independence day function at Tirunelveli Town, where several thousands of citizens were expected to assemble. A tough job for the police was prospected.

I left Melapalayam at 09. 30 hrs. Within about fifteen mintes, I was told on telephone, by a Head Constable of Melapalayam, that a procession of local Congress-men while passing through a street in the proximity of the police station, came under heavy showers of stones and other missiles, activated and abetted by a rival political party. The peaceful processionists were chased by a violent mob which attacked the police station where many had taken shelter. The S. H. O. had been seriously injured.

The police opened fire in self defence and to save innocent lives. Three among the rioters were killed and several injured. The effect of this tragic news on me was traumatic. I felt like a pricked baloon and dropped into a chair nearby. It took me a few minutes to recover from the shock.

When I reached the scene of firing, the S. P., S. D P. O. and local First and second Class Magistrates were already there. A case was registered and the First Class Magistrate held inquests over the bodies of the three persons killed in the firing.

The Collector, who was also the District Magistrate, inspected the scene and made enquiries.

The S. P. who had not seen me earlier was looking around to locate me. Turning to the S. D. P. O he asked :

" Where is your Inspector?"

I stepped forward and said " I am a Sub-Inspector in temporary charge of the Circle "

S. P. Do not try to evade responsibility by saying that you are only a Sub-Inspector. You are now an Inspector and we treat you as such. When did you reach this place ?

Self : This morning at 08. 00 hrs.

S.P. : How long did you stay here?

Self : For about an hour.

S.P. : Why did you vanish from here? Where did you go ?

Self : I went to Tirunelveli to supervise the Police arragements there, in connection with the independence day celebrations.

S.P. : Excuse me. I hold you responsible for all what had happened. Had you remained here, I am sure the situation could have been controlled without the police resorting to firing. You failed in your duty.

Taking the reins immediately Mr. Abdullah said: "I ordred him to go to Tirunelveli. At that time there was no indication of trouble.

Mr.Abdullah, a fresher, was directly recruited in a senior rank. Everyone admired the young officer, who spoke the truth with fearless forthright ness, quite unmindful of the consequences that might flow out of his voluntary admission. Beneath his Roman frankness lay his decisive nature, backed by a benevolent spirit.

The Collector completed his enquiries and left. After inquests and post-mortem examinations the bodies were handed over to relatives of the deceased.

The local atmosphere was charged with high tension. People appeared restless and frequently crowds gathered at important junctions to discuss the police action. Vigilance was tightened over the town with the help of the Armed Reserve, and policemen drawn from other stations in the circle. The injured residents and the S.H.O. were discharged from the hospital after a few days.

This incident of mob fury was the first finger of the new nation-hood that pointed to possible displosions of brutality if people of different political faiths failed to appreciate the views of each other.

The rioters were charged with the offences under sections 147, 148, 332, and 336 I.P.C. (forming an

unlawful assembly armed with lethal weapons and causing injuries to the public and a public servant on duty.)

The Additional First Class Magistrate of Tirunelveli conducted the trial. A battery of eminent lawyers turned their guns on the witnesses. As the prosecution had a solid case, all guns were silenced, all onslaughts repulsed and all law breakers jailed. On an appeal by the rioters against their convictions, the Sessions Judge Mr. M. Anantanarayanan, I.C.S. (who retired later as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court) confirmed the orders of the lower court.

Tirunelveli, July 1947, riots break out between two political parties, controlled, the rioters charged under sections 147, 148, 332 and 336, all onslaughts repulsed & all law breakers jailed.

Chapter 41

A Midnight Casualty

It was 03.00 hrs. I was fast asleep at my residence after tiring night roundsof TirunelveliTown, Tirunelveli Bridge and Palayamkottai areas. A police constable informed my mother, of a case of stabbing in which a retired police officer was seriously injured. No vehicle was reported to be available to transport him to the hospital.

My mother tried several times to wake me up, in vain. However, she persisted and succeeded in her efforts. and gave the news. I was fully reluctant to stir out of my bed. She lost her temper and shouted that if I did not get up immediately and go to the rescue of the stabbed man, she would pour a bucket of water over me. I was totally scared, because when she said it, I was sure she meant it. She was a disciplined type of parent who kept her children where they should be.

Growling, I got out of my bed. I cursed the victim. I cursed his assailant. I cursed my profession and myself. There was not even a drop of compassion in me, much less an urge for duty. I thought of quitting the job and choosing another. I aspired for a life many others were lucky to lead, working by day and resting by night. When I was about to go my mother said "what happened to that man might

as well happen to you. Further, it is your duty to rush to any place where police help is needed. You are paid for that and not for sleeping peacefully in your house when someone is in trouble".

Her verbal flourish had a magical effect. I hurried out of my house. My long and lanky legs appeared to carry me faster than they were capable of. When I saw the victim, a great change came over me. Nothing appeared more important than saving the life of the bleeding man. After rendering first aid I woke up a neighbour and prevailed upon him to drive the injured to the hospital. He obliged. The doctors happily took time by its forelock and did their best. The man was saved. The accused concerned were charged under Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code and convicted.

It was on the day when this crime occured that I tasted the exquisite bliss of a most keen sense of duty. I was excited with a rapturous joy of having saved a human life, that spilled over my later years, thanks to my tough, truthful and dutiful mother. Almost throughout my career as an uniformed policeman, she lived with me. During moments of defeat and frustration which were my constant and unwelcome companions, I looked to her for courage and direction, which she readily supplied. It was her conviction that any kind of patent profession of parental love would generate timidity in young minds. She did not hate love or love hatred. In house-keeping she did not permit the luxury of anybody's help.

The infirmities of old age can never be kept at bay for ever. At seventy five she was bedridden. She could not even sit up on her couch unaided. It was heart-breaking to see her reduced to such a state of helplessness. All along she had been self-reliant, assertive and seemingly invincible. She had never been in sick bed all her life and this fact alone rendered her suffering all the more poignant. She breathed her last when she was seventy seven.

Chapter 42

The Story of a Prodigal

I continued to hold charge of the heavy town circle, as two Inspectors posted successively, thought it wise not to join.

During the first week of September, I called on the S.P. around noon. He enquired about the Law and Order situation in my area. I assured him that peace prevailed everywhere. He was happy.

As I was leaving his room, I saw a vast concourse of people assembled outside the compound gate of his bungalow. This was a rare sight, since even in case of serious trouble none dared to bother the head of the district.

Eagerly, I questioned them about the object of their visit, in such large numbers. An advocate, whom I recognised narrated the atrocities of an obdurate marplot in their residential complex.

The evil-doer was said to be a childless widower. He had an opulent legacy. His aged father, who lived elsewhere lavished all his affection and money on him, who was his only son. Falling from the heights of a gentlemanly estate into the company of wastrels, the youth had abandoned himself to vice.

He was a veritable wine-bag. With his companions he gambled with devil's books late into the night yelling and quarrelling, disturbing the peace of the neighbourhood and sleep of its residents. If anyone opposed him or remarked about his way of life he did not hesitate to threaten to plunge his dagger into the heart of the man.

The inhabitants of the colony had brought a plaint in typescript addressed to the S.P., whom the advocate and a few others met. The S.P. received their document of distress and patiently went through all the pages, which embodied the facts cited supra.

Minutes earlier, I had assured the district chief that peace prevailed everywhere. I felt like one who was caught in his own snare for grossly misleading an officer with flaming lies. The S.P. showed great restraint of temper, and did not utter even a word to me in the presence of the nervous citizens. There was not even a ripple of agitation on his face. I was greatly beholden to him, for saving me from ignominy and discomfiture before the eyes of those whose trust I had forfeited. There was chaos in the area and the law and order machinery of which I was in complete charge, had completely cracked and crumbled with resounding echo and astounding evidence. Overcome by compunction, I was very much mortified and crest-fallen. Had I not been face to face with one who shaped my destiny, I would have certainly taken refuge in a local hospital, shamming Abraham, with the connivance of some obliging doctor. I liked to give a slip from the place, but that I was afraid would lay me open to a charge of cowardice. It was knotty predicament created by a naughty man. I decided to take up the gauntlet, thanks to the constraint of an untoward development

In a sympathetic tone, the S.P. told the people that their grievances would be immediately redress-

ed, and that they could get back hopefully. The crowd voiced loud concern about their safety, since the domineering Hector was out on the road, determined to pitch them dead, before they entered their houses. The horror-stricken people were there fore directed to stay in the park near the (old)police station for an hour or so, within which period they were assured the intimidator would be collared. With visible relief they consented.

The S. P. called me into his room with an angry expression on his face. I followed him like a frightened domestic pet. He arched his eyebrows and fixed me in a frightful stare which chilled me to my spine. His eyes turned into two furious asterisks. Taking out his kerchief from his pocket he blew his nose gently. He then shifted in his chair, crossed his legs and winced for a while. I had little doubt that during his self-imposed silence for a few minutes, he tried to dissipate his anger. In all probability he was aware of the canon enunciated by Thomas Jefferson :-

" When angry, count ten before you speak ;
If you are very angry, count hundred "

Judging from the time the S. P. took to speak to me it was clear that he had counted hundred. Thereafter, the dialogue between him and me was like a question and answer quiz.

S. P. : You told me just a few minutes before, that everywhere in your limits there is calm and peace. What exactly did you mean ?

Self : I did not know about this development. I realise this is a serious matter which I should have known earlier. I admit this is a definite lapse on my part.

S. P. : I wonder if your policemen ever visit the area concerned at all. Had they done so, this incident would have certainly come to your notice.

Self : There are no history sheeted Bad Characters in the locality in question. The charter of duties which I draw up for my men does not include this area. I realize that occasionally atleast, policemen should visit this, and similar areas to get first hand knowledge of law and order and other problems.

S. P. : I presume you watch BadCharacters who are not bad ; the really bad ones have your implied consent to get worse. Don't you have your net - work of informants ? Had you at least one, you would have known every development quickly.

Self : There is none.

S. P. : A very sad and disgusting state of affairs : Now LOOK ALIVE! Here is a challenge to your capacity. I want this bully to be arrested immediately. You have my permission to take a section or two of Armed Reserve Policemen, to help you.

Self : My constables, I am sure,will be equal to the job.

The S. P. who appeared satisfied with my reply, acquiesced with a wordless sound.

" I do not want any shooting or undue violence. Only recently, your men opened fire on a riotous mob on Independence day, and killed three persons. Be exceedingly tactful, and effect the arrest without any injury to any of you or the trouble maker. Please telephone me after the task is accomplished. Have you got me correctly".

Self : Absolutely, Sir.

As I was about to leave, the S. P. said " Good luck " in a fleeting smile with an unmistakable serio-

usness at the back of it. I thanked him for his good wishes. I had no reason to disagree with the S. P. who found my attitude to work disagreeable. I was eager to erase the adverse impression from his mind. Surely, the first step towards this goal was the arrest of the hell-hound, for which end, my action had to be hell-bent.

At my Police station, I assembled all the six available constables. Fortunately they belonged to the hard core of seasoned men, whose minds worked in perfect harmony with their muscles. We set out without loss of time, and without police muskets. We carried our truncheons. The S. P. ' s words were ringing in my ears : "I do not want any shooting or undue violence " .

When we reached the area, it was about 14. 00 hrs. The streets were deserted and not even one put his nose out of doors. The Bad character on the loose was not seen. Without difficulty, we located the bully's residence which was divided into two blocks facing each other - on the northern and southern sides. There were tall and thick bushes to the west of the southern block, where he mostly lived. The other block was used as a kitchen. There was an open window for the living room which faced the block in front.

I deployed my men in such a way, that all of them commanded a simultaneous view of the only entrance and exit door of his room. When I approached the open window, I saw the bully sleeping on a cot. There was a long sword on a wooden table, besides a transparent jug of water under an inverted tumbler. I called out his name and asked him to open the door. When he woke up, he reached his sword, and approached the window. He was a pimply sour-eyed man in his early thirties. I tried to impress on him that I had come only on a good will

mission, but my pathetic eloquence failed to click. He started advising me to get back as quickly as possible, since I could never dream of getting at him, wagging his admonitory index finger all the time. He further warned that if I persisted, I would become food for his hungry weapon,which he flourished at me. His attitude and demeanour, words and gestures clearly reflected his contempt for authority. When I insisted that I liked to meet him as a friend and not as a police officer, he fired his oral broadside at me from a point blank range in a chain of phrases steeped in stark obscenity. It was good, I thought that, our S.P. had ordered us not to carry fire-arms. That was a situation, when even the most forbearing human, would have lost his noble trait and expended a bullet deeming it least expensive and most satisfying. There was absolutely no doubt that the man had swizzled to his heart's content. This was evident from his behaviour and breath. His looks indicated he was far away from the world, where he really was. His talk confirmed this inference.

I told him that I was withdrawing, since he did not like to see any more of me, much less to speak to me. We retreated and hid our profiles in the tangle of bushes and shrubs to the west of his house. Crouching on the ground where the untended grass was higher than our ankles, we ensconced ourselves by doubling our legs. With our eyes skinned and ears pricked, we lay in wait at our stake-out in an air of expectancy like a beast of prey waiting for its victim. Time passed with excruciating slowness. Our only investment in the effort was relentless optimism. It was 16.00 hrs. As our lunch had bilked us, we were helplessly hungry and dog-tired. Like patience on a monument we squatted smiling at our plight. At 17.00 hrs. we heard the door of his room squeaking open. We became tense. The bully started wobbling towards the other block of his house,

without looking back. It was certain that he expected none of us to wait so long. We rose to our feet and stepped out of the bushes like a guerilla gang and tracked him with gingerly calm. Within seconds, with feline celerity and suddenness, I leapt into the air and when my feet landed on the ground my truncheon had executed a violent jab on his back, to the accompaniment of a simultaneous high - pitched guttural shout wnich my men and I set off, difficult to describe and impossible to spell. The attack and the noise shocked and sent him sprawling on the ground. His sword went out of his hands and reach. We seized him by his limbs, while one held his crotch. Displaying his sword we frog-marched him to our waiting van,which swept through the streets, honking its way to the police station. As we were moving out several closed doors flung open, and many heads popped out to see what was happening. The residents of this colony waiting near the police station hailed the refreshing news of the arrest of the repulsively repugnant character. They mobbed the police station, and sobbed their thanks, mixing their tears with cheers.

I telephoned the good news to the S.P. He directed me to meet him immediately, which I did. Cogratulating me, he said that he had never imagined that I could arrest the desperado so tactfully and that too, so soon. He promised to reward every member of the police party, who participated in the arrest. He kept his word.

A brief enquiry about the arrested man was conducted. Every one called him a noble savage. Noble when sober and savage when drunk. During his sobriety, his mind was as open as his pair of arms. He welcomed one and all with a smile as sincere and spontaneous as that of an air hostess. He was kind and hospitable. He spent lavishly to entertain those who visited him. Friends who enjoyed his

sober hospitality showered praises on him in a graceful style. Those who partook of his parties in high spirits went down on all fours and barked their flattery. His favourite pastime was gambling in which he mostly lost. For the prodigal, the world was like a Casino owned by a fond and forgiving father who paid up all losses and let his sinning son keep all his winnings.

The bully was a different and difficult person under the influence of liquor.He liked only those who could drink as much as he did. Others he hated like empty bottles of whisky. His drinking parties into which the local caitiffs jumped with both their feet began on a note of clear symphony, but ended in confusing cacophony, in the small hours of the mornings. When he became fully intoxicated, he would run out of his house, seize small objects too light to injure but heavy enough to annoy and flip them across on passers by. If anyone protested he threatened to kill him. In doors, he would drop glasses on the floor and enjoy the sound of its crash and the sight of its breaking up with peals of laughter. Obviously he believed that a little breakage, a little damage, a little anger and a little violence were good parts of a good evening's entertainment.

Several instances of his drunken and disorderly behaviour in public places were gathered. On a charge-sheet under section 110 Cr.P.C., he was bound over (by the local First Class Megistrate) to be of good behaviour for a period of one year. Thereafter, bad luck never parted company with him. His father died suddenly. All his drinking cronies had fallen away. His expenses were equal to his desires, but his income was less than his expenses. The poor alcoholic fell ill seriously. His house came under the hammer. Medicine failed his body and religion failed his soul. What rescued him from the agony he suffered in his mortal cage were the icy hands of death. His birthright was silver spoons, but in death he did not have even a copper coin.

Chapter 43

An Assortment of Assignments.

During mid 1948 Mr. Dhanarajlu Naidu was transferred. Always alert and cheerful he had a genuine sympthy for his staff. His orders on rewards were liberal and punishments careful. In June 1949, I was given a special assignment to function independently under the direct control of Mr. J. L. Ronson, I. P., the last British Superintendent of Police, of the district. My job consisted of conducting special crime investigation and arrest of persons involved in them. A small complement of staff of my choice was attached to me. As I had to tour the entire district, a jeep and a driver were placed at my disposal.

Initially for a few weeks, we busied ourselves with building up a network of informants in areas where we needed them either to provide correct intelligence about wanted persons or to aid us in their capture or both. Thereafter, we prepared our weekly agenda at the top of which were tasks that merited instant action. Due to my long experience in the district I knew all the trunk and feeder roads as well as the lines on my palm. This knowledge helped me to plan our course of action. We were happy to achieve unique success.

In pursuit of a wanted accused, we reached his village around midnight and parked our vehicle at a convenient spot. We walked towards a cluster of houses. Enroute, we saw a man sleeping on an open bullock cart. Waking him gently, we enquired about the house of the person we were concerned with. After a short reflection, he said, he would take us to the place. Our suspicions were stirred when our chancy cove started pacing briskly. Two of my men took hold of him and we went ahead. On our way, we decided to request the village headman to assist us. We called at his house and sought his co-operation in our mission. When he saw our helper sandwiched between my two policemen, he exclaimed, "He is the man". We were amazed. We fettered his hands and led him away, thanking the headman for his timely tip, but for which the crafty culprit would have given us a cunning slip.

On another occasion, during one of our nocturnal adventures, we were racing along a road which closely hugged a forest. We had logged impossible miles that day. Our brunch sustained us till about 20.00 hours when we enjoyed our table-d'hote dinner in an unpretensious wayside restuarant. We had a rendezvous with our informant in the small hours of the morning. I sat next to the driver, while my men folded themselves into the rear seats. Due to the weariness of travel, I was constantly closing my eyes and waging a serious battle against sleep. At 02.30 hours, I suddenly discovered that our jeep was moving over a bridge which appeared to be broken. The driver too had become a victim of spells of " forty winks " . Without causing a fright, I gently touched him and asked him to stop. He braked and the vehicle came to a standstill about fifteen feet short of the broken edge of the bridge. All of us were shocked and shaken. Death was only

a few seconds away, a few yards away. We pushed back the jeep to the road down below. At the entrance to the bridge the word " Diversion " painted in twiggy lettering on a piece of undressed wood was mounted on a pole. The headlights of our jeep had failed to pick out this signal, which had been swallowed by the foliage of trees around. We parked our jeep blocking the road leading up the bridge to deter unwary motorists, from danger and death.

Not at all distressed for not keeping the appointment with our informant, we rejoiced at the narrow escape we had. Cancelling our further journey, we extended our frames and bivouacked. That was a jungle noted for reptiles and foxes. Overpowering sleep did not allow us think of these hazards.

Early in the morning we cut and cleared the foliage that blacked out the danger signal and blocked the entrance to the death trap with a stone wall.

When we returned to the headquarters, Mr. Ronson was on a short leave. I met an aide of his, who was in charge and narrated to him the story of our hair-breadth escape from death and possible destruction of the jeep. He listened patiently and observed coolly ;-

" We could spare all of you, but not our jeep ".

Chapter 44

At the C. I. D. Headquarters.

After a couple of months, my staff was disbanded on completion of all assignments. The C.I.D. had asked for my services and I joined the setup in 1949 at Madras.

When I reported to the Deputy Superintendent of police, he directed me to an Inspector whom I shall call ' Z ' to get the initial touches to enable me to function independently subsequently. To understudy Z , I was eager. I thought that the blue bird of happiness and good luck had settled in my forecourt. To my great consternation, Z displayed obvious reluctance even to speak to me, and much less to look me in the face. It was annoying to me and more so perhaps to him to sit side by side for hours together without exchanging a word, no, not even a glance at each other at the same time. Whenever I requested him to involve me in his work, he would either raise one of his hands signalling silence, or draw a red herring across the track by employing me on some futile job.

After a week, I met the branch officer, (Deputy Superintendent of Police) to bring the unique and unfortunate situation, I was placed in, to his notice. I entered his room and bowed respectfully. With a

touch of asperity in his voice, he directed me to go through a report and offer my comments on it.

It read as under :

(Personal)

" Sub Inspector Philips has shown neither aptitude nor application to educate himself. His utility appears quite doubtful "

(Sd) Z.

These two short sentences, which made a backhanded reference to my capacity, told a long story, a pithy story, a painful story, very much calculated to harm my interests and cut short my days in this particular department of police work. I was shocked. For a minute or two, I was wordless and motionless. It was quite disheartening that Z had loaded his dice against me, even before the start of the joyless game of understudying him. It was my bad luck, that the blue bird of happiness in my forecourt had appeared as a vulture in my backyard and attacked me insidiously. I was acutely conscious of my ignorance of C. I. D. work and the urgent necessity that this be remedied.

Recovering my self possession, I explaind to the officer what all had happened between the Inspector and me and pleaded for another opportunity to prove my mettle. He was silent for a while. I could not conjecture if it was reflection or hesitation or both or neither. Thereafter, he got up from his seat and paced up and down his room with his hands clasped at the back. My eyes followed him closely. He resumed his seat after a few minutes and summoned the senior most Inspector of his branch and handed me over to him with a fresh lease of life and what I certainly understood to be the final one in the C. I. D.

My experience with this preceptor was exhilarating and enlightening. He went about his job with boy scout sincerity and guided me into the nuances of the profession so that I could match its sophistication. With a happy talent of effective communication and gentle manners he was of easy elocution, methodical in matter and logical in presentation. Recognising my good luck in having got the right kind of instructor, I went allout to consolidate my gains. Our feelings towards each other glowed at the same temperature though at different angles. His was a mixture of interested sympathy and duty and mine intense reverence and gratitude. We proved worthy of each other.

I found my work satisfying and for the senior officers it was satisfactory. I was given an independent charge. I did not belie expectations.

I was a senior Sub - Inspector and despite this, promotion to the next higher rank of Inspector eluded me. Rolls for the inclusion of my name in the list of Sub - Inspectors fit to act as Inspectors were sent during the years shown below :-

Year.	No. of times recommended
1946 ...	2
1947 ...	1
1948 ...	1
1949 ...	1

These rolls were sent by the Superintendents of Police, and the D. I. G. concerned made the final selection. The approval of the I. G. was only a formal affair. Recommendations made by the Superintendents were not of uniform quality, but varied in proportion to the merit of the sub inspectors. As juniors were generously promoted over the heads of seniors, seniority appeared to be neither a criterion nor a condition.

The very fact that my name was sent up as many as five times indicated that my biofile containing reports on my work could not speak loudly and if at all it did, the selectors did not lend their ears to its pleadings and prayers.

Towards the fall of 1949, when I was stepping out of the C. I. D. office at Madras, I met Mr. A. Mohammed Ali, a former I. P. officer, about whom a reference has already been made in earlier pages. As boys we were class fellows in the Union Christian School at Madurai. When he learnt that I was only a Sub - Inspector even after completing twelve years of service, he volunteered to help me out of the unenviable situation. I thanked him for his kind concern.

In 1950 my name figured in the promotion list. I had no doubt that Mr. Mohammed Ali had done his best. His co - brother, was the D. I. G. of our Range, who selected me. At long last I got the justice I deserved though more than a score of my juniors were promoted earlier.

Chapter 45

My First Taste of Inspector-ship

Early in July, 1951, I was promoted and posted as officiating Inspector to Sankaranainar Kovil Circle in Tirunelveli district.

The C.I.D. Headquarters at Madras, appeared least concerned with my promotion. This was evident from the leisurely way they arranged for my relief. I was able to join the post only on August 2. The delay in my assumption of charge adversely affected my seniority as Inspector. From that year onwards the services of Inspectors were computed at the State level and seniority fixed according to strict priority in joining the new posts. Many of my juniors who stole a march over me, were declared seniors, to my great grief. This was a second instance of my misfortune.

My predecessor at Sankaranainar Kovil who was to enter on his leave for two months was anxiously waiting in his office, with a First Information Report in a murder case of a far flung station. He was more happy to be rid of the bother of investigating the case, than the relief from the post itself. I recorded my arrival and took over the case. My personal eff-

ects were yet to arrive and I had no change of clothes. However, hoping to return to my headquarters that night, I proceeded to the scene of crime with a constable.

I reached the village by about 16.00 hrs. The inquest and the preliminary investigation had been conducted by the concerned S.H.O. and copies of these records were with me. I inspected the scene of crime and started enquiries. The deceased, according to th · F I.R.' was strangulated and thrown into a well. The accused contended that he met with his end by accidental drowning. The complainant's party had capitalised on his death and foisted a case of murder on them, as there was a long chronicle of enmity between the two sides

The evidence of the witnesses for murder appeared to have been carefully planned and planted. It was difficult to find any contradiction since every point of ocular proof had been expertly cut and adroitly tailored to suit the circumstances and events, quite admirably. Despite all these, one could not resist the inference that the entire fabric of testimony was purposefully got up.

In his delayed certificate, the Medical Officer, who conducted the autospy had ruled that death was caused by strangulation.. In support of his verdict he had furnished proof which was as watertight as the suspects in the crime had hoped to be leaky. In view of the evidence of the eye witnesses supported by medical opinion,legal advicefavoured indictment of all the accused. It was felt that only a court of law could decide ont he issues involved and that the police had no alternative.

During the preliminary trial, the testimonyof witnesses skidded off the frame of evidence pictured in the bill of indictment and wandered into the jung-

les of their fancy. Their hypocrisy fostered a long line of lies which became instantly patent during their testimony in the witness box. The trial brought into sharp focus an incontrovertible factor-that truth had been sacrificed on the altar of untruth. This was a case of vengeance pursuing vengeance. The crime drove home the import of the Vietnamese pro verb "If we take vengeance on vengeance, vengeance will never end". The Magistrate felt that the prosecution story was riddled with suspicion not only in its totality, but also in its divisions and subdivisions, fragments and segments. All the accused were set at liberty.

Chapter 46

A Grievous Mistake

The circle was a heavy charge, with five police stations and two out-posts. I had to deal with a mountain of correspondence which made serious inroads into my precious time. While at headquarters I was given to frequent nightly stints to keep off the flood of papers, trying to engulf me. My predecessor, who availed of two months leave spent almost the whole period clearing his shelves overflowing with pending papers.

I was processing a case relating to an enquiry against a constable who had levelled false allegations in writing, against my predecessor.

The delinquent desired to see the relevant papers, so that he could chart his line of defence. Since this was permitted according to rules, I made over the entire file to him He took it to an anteroom, and after five minutes reported that the paper containing the allegations he had made in his own handwriting was missing from the file. Obviously he had removed and destroyed it. Being a crucial document its destruction shattered the foundations of the case against him.

I had acted without imagination. I could have easily resorted to anyone of the following measures:

(a) Directed the constable to peruse the file in my presence or requested my S.H.O. to deputise for me during the perusal.

(b) Handed over the file after numbering all the pages, under an acknowledgment from the delinquent. Missing papers could have been easily located, when he returned the file.

(c) Furnished true copies of all important documents, which were only a few in number.

Loss of an official paper is a serious matter. When the subject relates to false allegation against a superior, in which discipline so vital to the Police Force is involved, the seriousness assumes a greater dimension. If a responsible officer (like an Inspector) is found guilty of neglect, which caused the disappearance of the document, the magnitude of the lapse is immense.

I was charged with dereliction of duty, resulting in the loss of a record. The Superintendent of Police who censured me commented:

"The officiating Inspector bas made a bad beginning. He is squarely guilty of negligent handling of an important file, resulting in the loss of a vital document"

I had no grievance. I deserved the penalty.

All this happened within a few days of my promotion. Normally one makes a start on a new job with a glow of enthusiasm and an abundant flow of self-confidence. Stripped of these, I became a symbol of two in one, combining dejection with diffidence. The fault lay exclusively at my doors. I was not alive to the danger of trusting one, who had given ample proof of his untrustworthiness. Not an unwilling policeman, but an unliving professional, I proved to be. I was like the young eagle, which lent its plume, to fledge the shaft, with which it met its doom.

Chapter 47

On a Dacoit's Trail.

Hardly had I completed a month, when I was moved to Tirunelveli Taluk Circle at the district headquarters. Within a few days, I was relieved.

I joined the new post on October 6. I called on the S. P. who made a specific mention of a case of dacoity, in which all but one accused had been arrested. He was the leader, who had secreted somewhere the looted wealth of gold worth about Rs. 25, 000/. I was urged to track this absconder and trace the unrecovered properties. The accused behind the bars who were awaiting trial had provided clues leading to the recovery of property valued only at Rs. 2, 000/—.

The case occurred in a village about 10 kilometres away from the headquarters. The house of the Village Headman, who was also a pawn-broker, was raided and gold and silver jewels, pledged with him were carried away at dagger points.

My predecessor did excellent work in locating and indentifying those involved in the crime. It was noteworthy that the criminals had displayed a devilish ingenuity in handling their victims, to induce them to part with everything they had in

record time. That the freebooters had an astounding awareness of the layout and location of the house they looted was very much in evidence. They had planned and executed the crime paying undivided attention even to minor details of their masterpiece from its conception to completion. Very easily they indentified the open and secret vaults in the house, and the looted properties were in their hands in a matter of minutes. The dacoits had left behind at the scene, a towel and an old money purse having in one of its chambers a bill for the purchase of a watch with particulars of the make, price, name of shop and date of sale.

Investigation surfaced the following salient features of the crime:-

1. The accused nine in number did not muffle their faces. One of them wore a watch which appeared to be new.
2. For more than twenty minutes, they remained at the scene of crime, when there was sufficient day light, and the victims could clearly observe them
3. Their accents and actions clearly betrayed their community.
4. A salesman of the shop, from which the watch was purchased volunteered with information that the buyer belonged to a particular village. This he had elicited during a casual talk during the purchase. Neither the buyer nor the seller could imagine at that time, the great discovery in a great crime, this small bit of information could lead to.
5. The priceless bonus a detective eagerly searches for, namely, finger prints, were scarce.
6. When the village of the criminals was discovered the dhoby mark on the towel yielded the needed clue. The entire gang which committed the dacoity was identified.

Equipped with these valuable odds and ends, my predecessor and his able staff, swung into action. The houses of all culprits were searched and a few jewels made of gold and silver were recovered. The investigating team continued its pursuit of the wanted men and thanks to their efforts, all but one, were secured and thrown behind the bars. Identification parades in respect of the arrested persons and recovered properties, helped to line up and link the criminals with the crime.

It was at this stage of the case, I came upon the scene. The absconder was the mastermind behind the crime He was believed to have concealed the unrecovered loot, somewhere in the bowels of mother earth. Many glittering prizes were dangled by the police before the public, for information leading to his arrest, but nothing was registered.

The accused continued to elude the dragnet of the sleuths. For every type of pursuit he had an answer. He was like a kind of virus which when confronted with antibiotics switches on to an adept adaptation to new conditions to thwart possible attacks. 'With his horse sense as his pilot he trusted his feet more than the friends he had.'

I was anxious to get at this will - o'- the - wisp for which my will was not lacking. Since I had not provided even vague evidence, to prove that I could match the challenges and responsibilities of my new office, I was very keen to lay the wanted man by his heels. I organised and led raiding parties on several occasions to track down the culprit in vain. With a vast load of work it was not at all possible for me to personally accomplish the task. Perforce I had to find someone who could under my command go about with sincerity and zeal to achieve the goal.

I was quite lucky that my choice fell on an enterprising young Head constable Mahalingam

(District Number 742) who had the dash and daring to undertake this onerous job. I put him on the track of the wanted man with a youthful team. They were well heéled. For such challenging duties only youths, I believe, are best suited. They can infuse into their work the fresh effervescence so natural to their age, which gives them the needed get up and go. A good majority of those who have passed their youth, find to their dismay, that their get up and go, have already got up and gone. I was gratified that the team was putting forth intense and ingenuous efforts without resting on their oars. Having sorted out several clues they were in hot pursuit of useful ones. They moved with the easy fluidity of men in a gymnasium. Like ambitious mountain goats hopping happily from crag to crag in search of the summit, the H.C. and his team pursued the wanted man with good cheer and vision at great personal discomfort and risk. Undoubtedly, they believed that if anything was worth doing, it was worth doing well. It is needless for a painter who paints acarpenter to know anything about wood or wood work. A policeman who chases a criminal must know his antecedents, modus operandi, the implements he uses, the means of his disposal of stolen goods, his contacts and associates, who feed and shelter him and a multitude of other details like his tactics of evasion and his weakness for women or wine. The Headconstable and his team apparently made of flurocarbon had every kind of detail about their target at their finger tips. My faith in the team's loyalty, capacity and determination to achieve their goal was as intense as that of a Christian Priest in the wine and wafers that he administers in the holy communion.

During the second week of October, one afternoon when I returned home from the head-quarters of my S.D.P.O., I found Mahalingam waiting for me at my residence. He gave my ears a great treat. The wanted man had been laid by his heels.

Though the H.C's voice was tired his mood was jubiliant With his team, he had trekked intractable jungles for days on end and tracked their quarry along twists and turns like the convoluted trail of a cobra and apprehended him in his hide-out. This news was indeed a refreshing tonic to my tired nerves, warming the cockles of my heart. I congratulated my ace detective.

It was thereafter my responsibility to question the man and set in train efforts that were needed to recover the looted jewels. We proceeded to the police station and started interrogating the dacoit. He was built like a vintage type of Freight locomotive, with short legs, massive torso and protruding eyes. A dyed-in-the-wool gimlet character, he was unreservedly. He pleaded that a couple of hours of sleep would refresh him after which he could give us the whole story of the crime from alpha to omega. There was no doubt that he was playing for time. We sensed that delay was quite dangerous. He craved for hot drinks. We tried to put him off, but he was adamant. We administered small but intermittent doses of the brand he wanted. This helped to raise his spirits to form a conduit between his heart and mouth. With little persuasion, he started boasting in his cups about the way the crime was thought of and committed after an initial secret survey of the house. There was also complete planning and rehearsal. Each one of them carried a specific weapon and played a predetermined part. He admitted that they had a thorough knowledge of the scene of crime and the lockers where the jewels were kept. I recorded his confession in the presence of witnesses. The accused promised to show us the place, where the pot of jewels lay buried. Two armed constables were placed in charge of the prisoner besides one Head constable. We added to our strength the headquarters Sub-Inspector also.

The police party and prisoner travelled in one vehicle, and the witnesses in another. Our destination was the periphery of the village to wi ich all the dacoits belonged, including the one in our custody. We halted at a distance of about two kilometres away from the scene of the proposed operation.

The village of the accused was congeneric with a generous sprinkling of those who were consanguineous. The residents were notorious rubber-necks. Nothing could happen in the village or around it without the entire lot of people getting to know, "What ? ... When ? ... Where ? ... How ? and Why ?. They would gladly risk a hundred lives to save one among them. Such was their clanish affinity that they were very close to their kinsmen who lived in distant places but quite distant from their close co-villagers who were not of their kindred. Our small force, though armed, could easily be outnumbered and outperformed. There was still daylight with its measureless glory, which was our enemy. It could easily betray us. Darkness with all its gloom was our friend, as very surely it could shield us Hence we remained inside our vehicles, parked behind bushes, away from the public road, and public eye. As my mind reached forward to our goal, I was shrouded in thoughts atonce hopeful, and doubtful of our victory. Fears lurking in the remote and murky corners of my mind appeared to have been suddenly dragged into a vivid perception. I shared my hopes with others, but kept the fears to myself. I wanted to make a silent approach to the site where the jewels lay peacefully buried and effect a silent retrieval. In this context, I realized the truth of the following Swedish proverb:-

"Great things are done in silence".

Ours was a great mission with prospects of a grand recovery. When the last shafts of dull twilight faded in the west and as gathering darkness swallowed the profiles of everything around, we alighted from our vehicles and proceeded cautiously. Our footsteps were muffled by our plimsolls. Our man in custody led us. Our movement was wary as if we were treading over egg-shells. Barring an occasional suppressed cough or a deep breath, there was no human sound. The fields that lay on our path had already been harvested. None, therefore, kept watch anywhere. There was absolute stillness in the air. It appeared that even nature had stopped breathing. All along my eyes were darting this way and that. Sometimes, I looked back as a measure of caution to see if anyone was either observing or following us.

The accused led us to the exact spot and pointed out a 'T' shaped ridge. Picks and shovels started swinging. Fortunately the soil was soft. Our hearts beat in hot suspense and our eyes scanned every inch of the deepening pit. Soon the top of a big earthern pot tied with a red piece of cloth emerged into view. Inside the pot we found glittering gold jewels, precious stones, articles of silver and other souvenirs, to our great joy. Despite our determination to be absolutely calm, we could not contain our exclamations of delight, in which I broke the ice. I effervesced and jumped into the air like an uncorked bottle of whisky. Others too, exhibited their joy but mildly The pot of gold was carried by one of my stalwart constables towards our vehicle, after we had prepared the seizure list, which was attested by the witnesses. We returned to our headquarters by midnight.

The following day, the recovered gold and silver were sent to the court of the Tirunelveli Sub-Magistrate for safe keeping. In the bulk recovery of these

precious and valuable properties, we found a sure basis for our reassuring thoughts for the ultimate and appropriate justice for the guilty. Our good work drew the warmest response from all concerned. We became the toast of the public and boast of the District Police. For the next two days after obtaining a police remand from the Magistrate for our prisoner we toured several places and recovered many items of looted property which were either sold to the public or jewellers or pledged with pawn brokers. The total value of the seizures was estimated around Rs. 25, 000 / – and for today's reckoning the amount would be in lakhs.

After a preliminary enquiry by the Magistrate, the nine accused were committed to stand their trial before the Court of Sessions under Sections 395 and 397 I. P. C. (dacoity armed with deadly weapons), when a tortuous chain of evidence was unfolded. The links in the chain were : -

1. The eye witnesses who were the direct victims of the crime.
2. The owners of the jewels that were pawned with the complainant.
3. Jewellers, and goldsmiths who either sold or made the pawned jewels.
4. Jewellers, shop keepers and gold - smiths, who purchased the jewels from the dacoits or melted them.
5. Witnesses for recoveries effected from the above
6. Police investigators.
7. Detectives, who apprehended the accused.
8. Attestors in the records of arrest of the accused and those who testified to their confessions.
9. Corroborating witnesses.
10. Individuals who proved a variety of facts about the movements of the accused.

11. Magistrates, who conducted identity parades for the arrested criminals and looted jewels.

12. Police officers who brought home the charge under Section 75 of the Indian Penal Code (criminal antecedents) against some of the accused to justifyenhanced punishmentsfor them.

The trial lasted for a fortnight when dozens of witnesses were examined and cross examined at length. The accused pleaded not guilty. A galaxy of eminent lawyers defended them

The Public Prosecutor of Tirunelveli laid bare the case like a neat blue print containing all the details of the crime, the part played by each accused, and the recovery of the jewels. The defence contended that the Police had foisted the case on them to earn credit. Their plea misfired as it ran short of proof.

The Sessions Judge handed down sentences ranging from five to seven years, to all the accused.

Those convicted preferred an appeal to the High Court. The State Public Prosecutor at Madras punched home the message of guilt of the culprits beyond doubt with solid proof. He described the dacoits as active members of a criminal syndicate who enjoyed crime as a delicious dinner, for which innocent citizens had to pay a costly bill.

Dismissing the appeal, the High Court appreciated the work done by the Police in recovering the bulk of the gold after a long distance of time, though the victims had forgotten about their precious possessions, and reconciled themselves to their lot. Many who purchased gold (from the criminals) at low prices were run to earth. Their secret liaison and transactions identified them as witting financiers of crime. They paid heavy penalties.

Chapter 48

Tuticorin

Within weeks I was displaced from Tirunelvely Taluk. Tuticorin was my next charge. My recurrent transfers were unwarranted and unjust. That a rogue's march awaited me at every place, became a sad possibility. Interested hands were at work behind the scenes to help every amne damne with chosen stations. Enmeshed in a web of uncertainty, my future remained nebulous

The Taluk circle with itsheadquarters atPalayamkottai town, covered only rural areas. Here the Inspector enjoyed the boon a town life without its bane of endemic grime, crime and tension. He lived in the High grounds, a salubrious and pleasant locality. Known as the 'OXFORD' of South India Palayamkottai has four first grade colleges, within a radius of less than five kilometres. Educational facilities for boys and girls are excellent

On receipt of transfer orders, my successor knocked at my office door, availing only journey time and not joining time. Perched on the crest of great hurry, he flapped his wings and crowed to take over immediately Undoubtedly inwardly he feared, that delay might bring forth unwelcome offshoots, alter his posting, and deprive him of the benefits he had

laboured to reach. I handed over all government properties. When the pending papers and files were under listing, my reliever pleaded softy that I could confidently leave everything in his safe hands without a formal record. Crediting him with the honesty and trust his age and seniority deserved, I acceded to his wishes.

After taking over charge of Tuticorin circle, I reached the S.D P.O.'s bungalow to meet him. He was pleased to grant me an audience after keeping me waiting for half an hour. Not bothering himself even to offer me a chair, he talked a few words, looking out through the window which commanded a view of the sea, about 200 metres away. He then permitted me to leave I shall not call this an interview. It was only a view. I looked at him all along and he never looked at me. I thought that even if he felt that the unclear and far away sea was better to look at than my clear and nearby face, he was not wrong.

In sharp contrast to the S.D.P.O. was the Sub-Collector. When I called on him, he seated me forthwith and his vox humana flowed free and easy. His brief about the Police needs of Tuticorin and the attributes and attitudes of the prevailing political climate as well as the tensions that plagued the various political creeds was illuminating. I gained much local intelligence within a short space of time. Before I could thank him, he thanked me for having called on him. The cheerful promptness with which he received me, the depth of his knowledge and the dignity of his expression proved beyond all doubt that he had the heart of the innocent, the eye of the experienced and the style of the master. The Sub Collector was Dr. P C Alexander of the Indian Administrative Service. He is presently the principal Private Secretary to the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indra Gandhi.

When my life in Tuticorin was beginning to order itself smoothly, I was rudely shaken. I received a telegram from the S.P.'s office about a file in my custody earlier at the Taluk circle, reported missing by my successor. I was directed to surrender it or account for it. The file was an important one relating to indictments of criminal misappropriation, against three policemen including a Head constable. Gold jewels removed from the dead body of a woman during an inquest, were not brought on to the records. Enquiries were pending against the offenders. There was a heavy load of work herein for the Inspector who had to frame charges against the delinquents, obtain their explanations, examine witnesses and process the cases.

Whip and spur I rushed to Palayamkottai. My scuccessor was away on court work. When I contacted his writer, who worked under me earlier, I received shocking news. He confided to me, that under the orders of my successor he hadburnt the file. The writer was not prepared for an official testimony, as it would prejudice an officer under whom he had to work His attitude was understandable though not honourable. I had no proof that I had handed over the file to anyone. As such I was answerable for its loss.

For entrusting a policeman only weeks ago with a file which he tampered with I had paid the high penalty of punishment. Despite this bitter experience, I repeated a similar error with another policeman, though senior in rank. The result was worse. The reason for my fault lay between the Scylla of ignoring the past and the Charybdis of repeating the error. I was in knots with fear and anxiety. In abject distress my imagination preened its feathers. The S.P. was an officer who had risen from the subordinate ranks. He used sledge hammers to crack egg shells. He believed

only in severe punishments even for trivial offences Quite the opposite was the young S.D.P.O.of Tirunelveli. Every default of his staff received imaginative treatment more corrective than punitive. His orders were tempered with the elastic springs of past circumstances, present reasons and future consequences. I apprised him of my unfortunate predicament and capitulated to his mercy. He was satisfied that I had been outwitted by dastardly perfidy. Readily he held out his helping hand and pulled me out of the abyss. Duplicate copies of all papers in the file were ordered to be made out from original records. My successor was directed to expedite the enquiries within a short time-schedule. The S D.P.O. was Mr. Balakrishna, who died prematurely as a D.I.G. in Karnataka, over a decade ago. I bow to his memory in reverence and gratitude.

Tuticorin was a difficult charge, with a dissenting multiplicity of political parties, each with its own plerophory, and persuasion. Dark clouds of potential violence hovered almost incessantly in the sky, with epidemic outbursts that shook and shocked the police, despite their vigilance and preparedness. The guardians of law had to keep theirfingers crossed. However professional crime was light.

On the night of November 21, I was attending to disposal of papers at my residence. The shallow sea nearby never roared, but across it came murmuring cold winds that soared and tapped the high porch of thatch on the frontage of my house. At 23.00 hrs. I heard the wailing of a woman sailing up towards the cheerless complex of police houses at the apex of which I lived. At short intervals, the pathetic voice hung in the air, as the woman probably shrieked in fits and starts. Visualising that some one in distress was approaching me for redress, I sprang to my feet and came to the porch.

Soon a woman with dishevelled hair was before me frantically gesticulating, without being able to articulate even a word. After regaining her self-possession and loosely binding her braid, she narrated how her husband had killed her mother with a sharp knife during a quarrel a few minutes ago, in their house at a distance of only about a hundred and fifty yards from mine. I brought out a sheet of paper and recorded her statement and set out for the scene of crime. Enroute, I collected two constables from their houses nearby.

The deceased, a gnomish gammer, was lying dead in a pool of blood, inside the scene house,with a deep stab injury on her left chest. I summoned five persons, who constituted a Panchayat before whom the inquest over the dead body commenced. The Headman of the area was present.

The proforma of the inquest report consisted of twenty six columns,each of which had to be filled in, with extreme care avoiding erasures, overwritings interlineations or errors I laboured for more than two hours

When it was time to record the verdict of the Panchayatdars, as to the cause of death, I called upon them to give their opinion. There was absolute silence. I thought they were afflicted by aphony.In dismay, I yelled at those present there, with the audacity and authority of a policeman of my days and commanded them to tell me where exactly the missing five were? A murmur indicated that they might have returned to their houses. I ordered my two constables to produce all of them before me.To complete the proceedings of the inquest early, the Panchayatdars were my hope, but they became my despair.

After half an hour, the duo reportedthat the fivesome who were fishermen by calling had embarked in their boats for deep-sea fishing. They were expe-

cted only after two or three days and that too if the wind and weather permitted. It was quite clear that their professional loyalty had outflanked mine. Without their presence and attestation, the inquest report was a mere scrap of paper. Most fishermen lived at sea in their schooners for several days. When they returned to the shore with their formidable harvest of catch they were received with tumultuous glory like visitors from the moon.

The two policemen who were assisting me could have easily foiled the attempts ot the Panchayatdars to flee, if only these guardians of law had kept their eyes open. That was too little an obligation. For them it was too much. It was clear that they did not like their conscience to interrupt their comfort. Among the entire gathering of humanity present there, only the Panchayatdars had been alert. All others had been either half asleep or fully so. I was busy filling the various columns of the inquest report, and I never thought, that I had to keep an eye on the pentamorous group as well. I had never done this before. When time was opportune, the genuine professionalists probably escaped like cats walking circumspectly over a wall studded with broken bottles. By their deliberate disappearance, the panchayatdars stymied the process of law and stalemated further investigation.

There was no other course except to summon a fresh batch, and go through the ordeal again. It was well past midnight. To get anybody out of his house during the small hours of the morning was woebegone. Due to the monsoon showers the temperature had fallen considerably. A cold sea breeze and intermittent rain tended to confine all indoors. During such a night one would naturally like to leave anything in the world, but his bed. I engineered a plan to secure five selected individuals who were available, and to use force if needed, to put my efforts through.

I collected a party of about a dozen persons and called at the house of our first target. When he responded and opened the door, two stalwarts pulled him out of the house. Totally alarmed, he howled. He was warned to be silent. Those who took charge of him, secured his hands and we went ahead. Repeating this ploy we "captured" four others, all of whom wept like women saying that they were innocent. For those who assisted me it was all coffee - and - cake - time They enjoyed every minute of the unlawful display of power and terror for which I was culpable, unexceptionally.

The entire group of five was marched to the scene of crime, and signalled to their seats. The "captives" were ringed by their "captors" who kept watch on them without even batting their eye-lids . I told our "Victims" in clear words that they were only to function as panchayatdars at the inquest over the dead woman to offer their opinion about the apparent cause of her death and that they were not at all suspected in the murder, as they feared . There were exclamations of relief and a couple of persons who continued to sob, rubbed out tears from their eyes with the back of their hands. Despite the upset caused by the disappearance of the first set of panchayatdars, I was happy that my craft and callidity avoided even a whisper of the great blunder of a double inquest over a single dead body .

All through my wrongful act of conquering the panchayatdars, my conscience walked behind like caesar's slave, warning me with a solemn import to steer clear of the unlawful course . My urge within to complete the inquest with all expedition was one which could be neither reprehended nor refrained. Delay meant possible decomposition of the dead body and a practical difficulty for the autopsy

expert to arrive at a correct verdict about the cause of death on which alone a charge of murdercould be based.

I was through with the second inquest within two and a half hours. The F.I.R. and other documents were read aloud. The Panchayatdars gave their unanimous verdict that the deceased appeared to have died from a stab wound inflicted on her by the accused during the course of a domestic breeze. The Medical Officer opined that death was caused by shock and haemorrhage due to the stab injury.

The scene of crime was a single roomed tenement with a kitchenette and a toilet under the occupancy of seven souls-the complainant, her husband (the accused), their four tiny tots and the deceased. The roomage was so small that the inmates appeared to have been living in each other's arms.

The accused was having an affair with an young girl in the vicinity. The illicit couple was so much absorbed in the bliss of their love one day, that they had thrown overboard the wakeful use of their senses. They failed to discern that the door of their apartment was left ajar. A peeping tom lost no time in tossing the apple of discord into the household of the accused by breaking the news of his discovery. The fires and flames set off in the family, consequently were never banked. The cuffs of the philanderer to his wife and children became more frequent than his caresses. His physical and financial attention to his dependents fell into pieces He passed his days like a callow youth with his head in the clouds and mind stuffed with visions of happiness of his new-found love.

The deceased, who was deeply agitated over the isolated frustration and loveless misery into which her daughter and grandchildren had been

plunged, was biding her time. When the accused made one of his rare appearances in the house, she erupted like a volcano and gave him a bitterly biting jobation. This triggered the homicide.

Many men and women have secret chambers in their lives in which they confine the free-masonry of their sex past or present. So long as these remain intact their connubial bliss also remains as such. If there is a very small leakage even, the emotional flood gates of jealousy, bitterness and revenge burst open to engulf the unfaithful soul Very few survive the sweeping currents.

The accused was charged with first degree murder. The pivotal evidence for the crime was flawed in the Sessions Court by the only eye witness, the wife of the accused, who recanted. She alleged that the Police had used her as a tool to further the prosecution story. The accused became a free man.

This case brings into sharp focus the following:-

1. Public apathy to cooperate with police, in crime investigation.
2. The sad fate of police cases, wherein married couples align themselves against each other, in battles before courts of law.
3. The disappointment with which the police have to put up, when their public image is sought to be tarnished by untrustworthy testimony — a "reward" they least deserve.

Chapter 49

A Case of Murder without Corpus delecti.

In April 1952, I was posted to officiate as Inspector of Tenkasi circle, which covered four police stations. Of these, three were in charge of directly recruited sub-inspectors, and at my head quarters, there was an officiating sub-inspector, promoted from the lower ranks.

The S,P.was Mr. T T.P. Abdulla, who had taken over in March that year. He knew the district well, as he had an earlier spell at Tirunelveli as Deputy Superintedent of Police. He administered the Force efficiently by laying the blame where it wasand lauding those who deserved laurels. That he had inherited a judicious mind from his father. who was a judge, was quite clear from his orders on promotions and punishments, awards and rewards.

In a mofussil station, attached to my circle, a case of murder was reported from a remote village. The deceased was a ragamuffin, who had no stakes in life. He was a hopeless alcoholic. When inebriated he fostered Dutch courage, fractured all norms of decency, and spouted abusive semantics on whomsoever he ran into.

One day, after a long carousal, the hobbledehoy staggered into the piazza of the village, and lashing himself into libidinous lather hurled satanic epithets with devilish abandon, against the local rich class. He then widened his attack when people of average means and even poor sections of the village society came within his despicable orbit. He singled out his victims by name and after heaping vile imprecations on them, assailed the character of their womenfolk even. Such was his impudence, and barbarism on this occasion that the most balanced men suffered imbalance, and those reputed for their constancy and conscience lost their virtues. Everyone longed for a mortality of their longstanding affliction, by writing the epilogue of the evil story of this potation lover in his own blood.

In an acerbic combinatfon of past grudges and present provocation, a handful of armed villagers hemmed round him. More joined thereafter. Amidst sepulchral sounds and confusing cacophony, th mob hacked him into pieces with a chilling assortment of Knives, daggers, spears and swords and reduced him within minutes into unidentifiable bits of bone and flesh. This was before the very eyes of his parents, brothers and sisters, none of whom dared to save the deceased, or utter even a word of cry, for fear of instant death descending upon them from the hands of the deliberate assasins. When their task was done, the authors of the bloody drama, gathered the remnants of the dead man in gunny bags and secured them on an improvised stretcher, which they carried with cries of victory, draping their heartless tyranny with hearty ceremony. They made for the rockies at the outskirts of the village. The hideous crime was rendered more hideous by the unholy shrieks and sounds of the murderers that filled the air, all along their route.

The father of the deceased ran to the village headman, a few miles away and reported the mur-

der. On receipt of intimation of the crime, the police registered a case.

Scurrying to the scene, I reached it at 07.00 hours the next day. As the S.H.O. of the Station was on casual leave, I took H.C 1243 M.R. Avudayappan from Tenkasi Police Station, for my assistance. The village was a picture of desolation and gloom. Men, women and children of all classes of society made themselves scarce as hen's teeth. I found a small party of policemen fast asleep in the local primary school. The headman ef the village and his staff arrived on my heels. They woke up the guardians of law, who on seeing me jumped out of their comfortable beds and ran helter skelter, as though there was an earthquake. They appeared before me after a good ten minutes. Eagerly, I questioned them about their attempts to locate the place where the remnants of the deceased were disposed of, or to apprehend the culprits. They held their peace. For a while, I thought they were suffering from collective tooth ache. Their. vacant eyes and void faces gave evidence against them. When I shouted my questions stentoriously, they mumbled their inaudible answers nervously. Decidedly, they were a bunch of unwilling policemen willing only to let others do all their work.

Some residents of the neighbouring villages poured in. Taking them and the village Headman along with me.I headed towards the hillock where the mutilated body of the deceased was believedto have been disposed of. After negotiating a semi circle on the periphery of the hillock, we ran into a track as rocky as a Himalayan footpath, leading up. As we ascended the slope, a forest stream threading its course in looping ox-bowscrossed our path on a long stretch of plateau. We saw a couple of flat rocks, near by, which showed signs of blackening by fire. A few trees in the vicinity told silent stories of tall flames

that burnt their branches and leaves partially. We delineated the area, and barricaded the flowing water with stones to facilitate a thorough scrutiny. The rays of the bright sun which searched the bed of the stream before we could do it, instantly brought to our notice several bits of bones at the bottom of the clear water.

I despatched a special messenger with a requisition to the Magistrate of the area to effect the recovery of the postmortem remnants of the murdered man. The Assistant Superintendent of Police, visited the scene of crime and conducted enquiries. He was Mr. S.M. Diaz, an officer of rare merit who practised his job to perfection. He remembered even the district numbers and names of constables. This was indeed a great feat of memory, since hundreds of men were attached to his sub-division. His grasp of police work was marvelious; he administered his sub-division with distinction. He retired as an I.G. of police, in 1977.

On arrival of the Magistrate, several bits of bones of various sizes either burnt or half burnt were recovered. from the bed of the stream . The most important seizure was the metallic buckle of the belt worn by the deceased while he was murdered . Though there were no specific marks on it, its pattern was unique enough to provide the needed identification . Further investigation was pursued under the direction of Mr . Diaz, when all positive links in the prosecution story were laid bare. Special detectives on the trail of the accused did commendable work in rounding up all of them, whonumbered seventeen, in a matter of days. Mr . Abdullah, the S. P. also visited the scene of crime and made enquiries.

All the accused stood their trial in the court of Sessions. Five eminent lawyers defended them. Relying on the evidence of eye witnesses who were the parents, brothers and sisters of the deceased, the Judge convicted the murderers to varying terms of long imprisonment. He was particularly happy that no attempt was made by the police to clothe the evidential skeleton with a colourful costume.

The accused appealed to the Madras High Court against their sentences. The public prosecutor, who ably marshalled the facts of the crime, presented the case with clarity and brevity. He conceded that the deceased was a living opprobium of all humanity in the village but that was no reason to eliminate him in the manner it wasdone. The P P. added that the accused who had an incredible contempt for law, had as well an incredible belief in their right to decimate their victim. He described the murderers as heartless and humourless humans through whose veins not blood, but ice water flowed freely. The degradation of the mind and spirit which prompted them to plunge into the deadly, dismal and macabre act did not touch them a whit. Summarising the prosecution story, the Public Prosecutor observed that the manner in which the killers had gone about their job and destroyed what remained of their quarry,could have violently rocked Hell and shocked all its permanent citizens even. In a reference to the sentences, he emphasied that the ends of justice would fail, if the convictions were modified or set aside.The High court dismissed the appeals of all the accused and confirmed the orders of the Sessions Judge.

The police came in for a pat on their back for their perseverance in locating the place, where the mortal remains of the deceased were burnt in a vast hilly tract and retrieving crucial material objects that furnished critical evidence of the crime. I like

to appreciate the valuable assistance rendered to me in the investigation of the case by M.R.Avudayappan, H.C. 1243. I had known him earlier when he served under me as a constable elsewhere. Both in the locating the place where the bones were discovered, and in gathering valuable junks of evidence against the murderers, the contribution of this H.C. was praiseworthy, He retired as a Sub-Inspector of Police in 1974.

After completion of several months as officiating Inspector, I was reverted to my substantive rank of sub-inspector. This was due to want of a vacancy. Shortly thereafter, mass reversions from the ranks of Deputy Superintendent of Police and below were ordered. The government had wound up several temporary departments brought into existence during World War II and in the wake of independence.

The entire period of my painful labour as an Inspector was erased, lock, stock and barrel due to lack of continuity. Thereafter, I was posted for a brief duration in the Record Section of the District Police Office (as a sub inspector) where the work did not even last for an hour a day. It afforded neither pleasure nor pride to be associated with such a type of employment, which was earnestly sought out only by those on the fringe of retirement or against whom enquiries were pending.

A feeling of overwhelming sadness settled on my mind, and dragged me into a spectrum of unrelieved gloom. I suffered a bitter bite of bad luck, which kicked the heart out of me. Dark clouds of unpromising future hung over and I lost all initiative and interest. Letting grass to grow under my feet, I exhausted all my leave.

Chapter 50

In New Delhi

By the fall of 1953, there was a circular from a Delhi based Central Police Organisation inviting volunteers for posts of Inspectors on deputation, provided the aspirants held either an Inspector's rank or were in the approved list of Sub-Inspectors fit for promotion as Inspectors. I grabbed the opportunity and communicated my willingness to accept the offer. There was little hope of success, due to stiff competition. Contenders for the mantle of deputation tothe central Government were too many.

In April, 1954 to my surprise and joy, I received orders appointing me as an Inspector on deputation in the organisation, I had opted to work. I joined my new post at Delhi on May 12.

The establishment branch of the Delhi office where I reported, directed me to a senior officer whom I shall refer to as 'A' for the sake of convenience. When I entered his room, he was leafing through the pages of a file on his table. I greeted him and introduced myself. He seated me immediately. Sitting back after a few minutes, he spoke rather stridently, with an intonation difficult to comprehend.

"Are you a L-I-A-R"? he asked.

"No Sir" I said emphatically.

I was sorry and surprised." Is this the first impression I have given?" I reflected sorrowfully.

After another brief pause, he continued his talk.

" Are you conversant with the Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Evidence Act?

It was then quite clear to me that what he meant was a Lawyer (one who knows the corpus of law) and not a liar, as I had wrongly thought. Modulations of voice, differ between people, who hail from different parts of the same country, even.

"I am thorough with the laws which are applicable to all branches of police work covering investigation of cases and their processing in court.'

"Good" he said.

Reaching his telephone, he dialled someone to meet him immediately. Within minutes a gentleman whom I shall call 'B' arrived. After a spell of introduction, 'A' directed 'B' to take me to his room and give me the necessary " Dope ".

When we came out,'B' started racing on the winding corridors of the massive Central Secretariat Building, turning right and left very rapidly.He soon disappeared. The whole area being new, .I lost all sense of direction. As I was standing at a turning, wearing a puzzled look, 'B' suddenly appeared and chastised me for not being smart enough to follow him. I apologised, and when he shot into speed, I began to trot. We reached his room at the farthest end of a long and narrow corridor abutting against a wall on one side and a row of small wooden

cubicles on the other. He signalled me to a vacant chair while he settled his bulk behind a large desk packed with files.

I was idling my time without even a book or news paper to engage my attention. Now and then 'B' squinted to see what I was doing. After about three long hours, when he deigned to talk, I preened myself with eager expectation. He questioned the sanity behind my option to work in Delhi on deputation.

"Your parent State will forget you and the benefits that you get here will never be beneficial in the long run" he said. He added that he too was on deputation, and was speaking out his mind frankly. He made it clear that he was intending to seek a reversion to his State. After a few minutes, he tried to drive home to me the same idea in flat words in a flat voice. His observations and advice on the first ever day of my official life in Delhi, made me quite uneasy, but I decided not to act in haste. It is relevant to mention here, that this officer continued to be on deputation till he retired and thereafter obtained the maximum period of reemployment permissible under the rules. The continuous spell of his stay in the set up facilitated his continuous instalments of unsolicited counsel to others to quit. He was far from happy at the results of his serious advice, which many interpreted as frothy folly set afloat in a loud blustering wind.

'B' was considered highly proficient in his work. Both his superiors and subordinates shared this view. When his table was clean which was constantly a recurring feature, due to his quick disposal of papers, he could not resist sleep. Usually, he swore loudly and proudly too, that he was accustomed to hard work, being always a doer and not an idler. When there was work, he did it. When there was none, he could not idle away precious

time. He had to do something and therefore he slept. Sleep, according to him, is the friend of man and enemy of idleness. No man could be said to be idle when he slept. This is a positive act. Veryoften during sleep he switched over to deep level breathing, punctuating it with occasional sighs of contentment.

He never gave me any file to read or work to do. He was as cold as the loose lower lip of a camel. Within a fortnight, two sub-inspectors joined. Due to limitations of space, all of us were directed to find our own accommodation in the branch, which was under him. This was on the ground floor, located on a narrow and neglected blind projection of the building. There were already four clerks working there. With three of us squeezing into the cramped area, the whole place looked like an overloaded public transport, some standing, and some sitting. For us every day was alack-a-day, with no work. We perched on propped up table drawers, or piled up tappal boxes. Though I had no work to do, a sub-inspector was attached to me. Our lot taught us patience. We learnt to disdain worries and woes, with a firm belief that all will be well soon, even if nothing goes well.

After about a month, when one of our senior bosses entered our office corridor where we were whiling away our time, we stiffened to attention, standing bolt upright. He questioned me about the nature and details of my work. I confessed I was doing nothing. Thereafter, he asked the Sub Inspector, attached to me about his work He gave out promptly that he was assisting me. The boss flew into a towering rage and ordered us to do clerical work at least as a temporary measure. This was no doubt a pattern, to which none of us was accustomed. It did not require the professional skill for which we were chosen.

The job assigned to us involved linking of connected papers and files, with receipts (incoming papers), making notations, and quotations and attaching flags and tags. This type of pass and repass of papers was insipid and uniteresting. We were forced, however to find interest in these.We did not protest for fear of departmental displeasure. Addressing ourselves to our tasks with discipline anddevotion,we won the appreciation of all who counted

My pay was held up due to non-receipt of the last pay certificate at Delhi. The office of the Inspector General of Police, Madras held that the certificate had been sent. It was believed thst this paper was misplaced at the receiving end. The Establishment branch of our Delhi office was overworked. The official dealing with my case declined my request for a special effort, other than routine action.

Four months passed without any payment. I had gained only a few fair weather friends. On a shoestring budget I tried to balance myself. I was frustrated but dit not despair. Dipping constantly into my depleting finances, I bade an early farewell to my last penny.

Life did not go on well for me. I fell ill. The only medicine I needed was money, but there was no doc.or to dispense this omnipotent drug. I did not have any nest -eggs too. When you are in impecunious circumstances even those who are known fall into the abstracted habit of sky-gazing when they cross your path. They know your predicament much better than you think. If your eyes happen to meet theirs, they refrain from parting their lips even in a thin line, lest this response be mistaken as a " How do you do ? " or " Come hither smile. " My experience sadly bore out these truths.

Sheer pity urged Krishnan, an office assistant of another desk to help me out of the situation. Setting

aside his work, he initiated urgent action in my case by flashing a wireless message to the I. G. P., Madras for the issue of another copy of my L. P. C. All arrears of pay were in my hands within a few days. I cannot forget the ecstasy that sprang from the Christian charity of my Saviour, who spared me from the agony of sending round my hat

In June 1955, I was posted to a new section in charge of a gazetted officer. More then a dozen personnel from the rank of Inspector down to the lowest level worked there.

Being the senior Inspector, I was nominated to direct and co-ordinate the work of the Unit. All paper workbecame my prerogative though I exercised no preference for it. The reports of most of the staff were in Urdu, since Hindi in those days was only in the infantile stages of its official usage. I found it difficult to collate and compile these reports since I had no knowledge of Urdu. I persuaded all concerned to write their reports in English. I was happy that thereafter everyone did as he was bid. The unintentional violations of grammar, orthography and calligraphy apart, the reports conveyed what was intended. Our immediate superior was well-known for his proximity to senior officers, whose confidence he enjoyed fully. This human factor ensured our smooth working and upgraded the value and utility of our output.

A series of field assignments headed by me with a fine team of chosen staff, made it possible for us to register constant success. The results were exclusively due to the unsparing efforts of the constituents of the teams who worked with sincerity and imagination.

Team work generates in every member the qualities of alertness, obedience, leadership, ability to take quick decisions and actions, readiness to sacri-

fice anything for the cause of work and eagerness to succour other team mates in danger or distress. Besides, team work fires the imagination of all constituents with the value of corporate effort. It destroys the tendency to corner individual glory, since everyone acts and believes that he is not an individual but only a part of a larger whole. With such labour pains a team gives birth to a spirit, christened as team spirit.

A team must be kept in a state of constant repair, inspiring, instructing, training and trimming. The team leader should dicover those who work outside their orbit and uncover their selfish motives. These are usually, abnormally ambitious people intent upon self advancement. They consider other team-members as competitors and arch rivals. The errant coterie should be cut to size or sequestered.

The ideal team justifies the motto : " All for each; each for all " . Such a team can dare, design, decide, move on and move up to show they are not just a scatter, but a swarm of designers, doers and improvers. They develop the capacity to accept truth and convert their past experience into research material for future experiments. Time therefore helps a circumspect team to transform all undertows of defeat into rip-tides of victory.

Chapter 51

I get a Promotion

In August 1956, I visited my home town on two months earned leave On return to duty, I was surprised to learn about my promotion to the gazetted rank. I was in no hurry to take charge of the higher post, since it meant lower emoluments

However, I took over on October 22, as a gazetted officer of another section which transacted desk work. On the heels of my elevation, arrived a directive requiring me to participate in discussions about certain official matters, chaired by a top-sawyer. With no back ground of the subjects on the agenda every item that was deliberatedand decided went over my head. Everyone except me, either posed questions or answered posers. I remained tight lipped.I was marked by the chairman. Whenever he looked at me, I looked at the ceiling. I believed in the old Chinese proverb : " It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool, than to open it and show you are one ".

In my new office, there were five assistants, three Upper Division clerks, a Typist and a Diarist. All of them were either post-graduates or graduates, who knew their work inside out. I passed my days happily. But my happiness did not last long. The

higher officers decided that I could be utilised elsewhere for out-door duties. Within a few months, I was posted to a Field Unit.

I joined my new post by the middle of 1957. I studied in depth all records, files which contained the achievemets, setbacks and pattern of duties allotted. There was a sizable staff. I compiled a new copybook of duties with a varied system of checks and assessments of staff performance. After approval at the highest level, these were implement ed. Initially the revised formulations seethed till they were teethed but gradually they steamed ahead and happy results became manifest. I commanded a fine team of junior officers, and men who worked with good cheer and vision. Deep love for duty went to the roots of their being.

In April 1961, I was assigned desk work. I maintained my gazetted rank, though the job was purely clerical. I thought I deserved a better deal. I was my clerk, officer and peon too to carry urgent papers to the bosses on many occasions. I shared the long table in the branch, happily with clerks, though I was entitled to a better place.

My work involved collection, collation and tabulation of statistics of crime in India. Pouring into statements and battling with the figures from morning till evening. affected my eyes which I could no longer trust without the aid of that helpful diplomatist a pair of spectacles My ordeal and order of the day were multiplications, divisions, additions and subtractions. These multiplied my woes, divided my energies subtracted from my initiative and added to my worries and tensions. I was a poor Arithmetician, who suffered from Arithmophobia Mine was a mechanical job with an elusive mechanism. When anything went wrong it was impossible to locate the error despite long hours spent in its laborious

pursuit. The only alternative was to dismantle the entire structure and rebuild it brick by brick.

The occasion for presenting the final chart of statistics for the year, for the whole of India was drawing near. I laboured day and night. There was not even a single soul to assist me in this dull job. Success appeared to be in sight on many occasions, but suddenly the whole fabric would go out of joint and collapse. A fair copy of the statistics containing several charts and tabular statements had to be put up to the Chief of the organisation the next day. It was nearing 17.00 hrs. Everything that flashed on my mind was inconceivably vague, and painfully confusing. Feeling dizzy and dazed, I found myself alone in the branch with the huge charts staring at me. I desired to go home only if the figures behaved, though I was sure that that would never happen.

I worked in the office till 22.00hrs, but made little headway. I decided to carry my burden home to find solutions for the conundrums.

I reached my residence at 22.30 hrs. It was a hole-in-the-wall, which I shared with my servant. After a brief wash, I hurried through my dinner. Spreading all the papers before me, I started to work. I laboured in vain to stifle a succession of yawns to which I became a helpless victim. I had two enemies to fight, my sleep and the chart. The first was vanquishing me with power and precision. I tried to steady myself but my head began to revolve in all directions.

My khidmutgar Umed Singh sympathised with my lot. He suggested that I wash my face and offered to prepare tea in the meanwhile. I poured water into my eyes and rubbed my face with a towel dripping with cold water. I downed a full cup of hot

tea which burnt its way into my stomach. I began afresh with better vigour, which was short lived. Every second, sleep was tightening its grip over me. It was past midnight. Umed Singh volunteered to do the tabulation, if I explained to him the process. I was inclined to reject his help, but he persisted. I briefed him fully. He gathered all the papers and settled down on the floor to work, Reclining on my bed I fell asleep within minutes.

At five in the morning Umed Singh woke me up with a cup of tea. He said he had spent a sleepless night and completed the work. I was amazed. A new chart with all figures entered in the correct columns was ready. I applied the formulae prescribed for testing the correctness of the entries. Everything was correct. To be doubly sure, I repeated the checks. They were correct again. Thrilled by transports of joy, I jumped forward and shook hands with the boy, who had proved that he was nolonger my servant, but my master. By his unsparing adjuvancy he had saved me from the sorry pass of laughing on the wrong side of my mouth.

I gathered all the papers, stood to attention and saluted my saviour. He had painstakingly mopped out all errors of calculation, and perfectly mapped the perplexing figures, after long hours of cheerful labour. I reached office with record speed. After the typing work was done, the figures were compared and the copies of the chart, pressed into special folders. These were placed before my immediate boss. He found everything in order. All the papers were then sent to our Chief.

I continued to plod in the branch of numbers. Crime figures of various friendly countries in the world were exchanged with ours. The subject headings were in the languages of the nations

concerned. These were translated by experts into English and comparative statistics which included India's crime figures, were compiled thereafter, with explanatory notes, comments, criticisms and cross references. I could not command any assistance; undisputedly the deadlocks in the complicated work were my lot. If any one helped, it was only to put a cat among my pigeons. I survived my ordeals by putting painful and positive pressure on my inadequate talents to toe the line of duty, decreed by destiny.

Chapter 52

A Welcome Transfer

I rejoiced when I received orders to head another branch on transfer. My transformation from a "clerk" to an officer overnight was unexpected. I made over to an obliging colleague and happily left the place where I lacked the will, wisdom, and virtue to work.

The sphere of operation of my new office was confined to the four corners of my table, and the long corridor behind, which housed my staff. There were five assistants (Grade I ministerial employees) and an Upper Division Clerk. The desk work involved was heavy and complicated but I never experienced any strain at any stage, as my staff was highly efficient. Consistent with my status, I was provided with a P.A. and a Peon.

In June, 1962 I was directed to appear before the Departmental Selection and Promotion Board at Madras. Though I held a gazetted rank on deputation, I was only an inspector in my parent state. This selection and promotion board, a much needed official apparatus which functions even today, was created by Mr. Balakrishna Shetty, after he became the Inspector-General of Police of

Madras in 1957. Earlier, promotions were directly related to the recommendations from the concerned district or range heads. While many who deserved got their share of luck, favouritism was not completely absent. It is now mandatory on the part of the Board to interview all eligible candidates. For the posts of Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors, the Board selects and fills the vacancies, but for gazetted ranks, its functions are advisory. The credit should go to Mr. Shetty, for re-writing the history of Police promotions in the State, in golden letters.

On the appointed day, I presented myself at the Office of the I.G. of Police at 10.00 hrs. It was a happy occasion as I was able to meet several old colleagues after a long time. The intrusions of seediness which even a careful makeup cannot hide, were visible in many. Thinning hair, drooping jaws and missing teeth were the usual features. In the case of a few, webs of fine lines distributed around their eyes, like crow's feet appeared as tributaries of deeper creases around their cheeks and chins. These were symbols of a losing battle with Father Time. For those who were earlier well known, recognition was not difficult, since the essential topography of faces hardly change. Top world doctors say that the fourteen bones which provide the underlying structure of the face differ in size and shape from person to person. Further, the tissues that separate the skin from nearly a hundred facial muscles cause the variation in facial expressions. These two factors taken together give a personal identity to every man. Had only Mother Nature been unkind all humanity would have looked alike rendering identification impossible. Every Country then, would have been compelled to allot Registration numbers to her citizens to be displayed on their persons, like motor Vehicles.

The beginning of my interview was quite good, but its end quite the opposite. Trouble erupted when I parried certain questions of the Board which I should not have done. In a shellburst of anger, the Chairman accused me of lack of trust in the high powered body. My wrong attitude notwithstanding, it was unfortunate that he who presided over the fate of many allowed his emotions to prevail over his long headedness and judgment, which resulted in an unpleasant audio-visual display.

When I came out, those waiting to be interviewed converged on me to ascertain the cause of the breeze within the hall of destiny. To avoid the misfortune of rehearsing a misfortune, I rushed past everybody and left the place immediately.

Though hit by a bolt of bad luck, I was nonchalant. However, I was acutely grieved at the sad experience Already scores of my juniors had gone over my head, and it hardly mattered if some more did so or even if my promotion was withheld I had been reduced to a stick-in-the-mud. I regretted for having undertaken the long trip from Delhi as the Government paid no travelling allowance on this account.

I had planned to leave Madras by the evening train that day itself. At about 14.00 hrs. I was informed by an old colleague on telephone at my hotel room that a box awaiting transport to Delhi to a very senior officer would be placed in my compartment at the Madras Central Station. I was given to understand that it would be collected at my journey's end. I agreed. Since my ticket had been confirmed, I set apart only the needed money for my expenses on food and other exigencies of travel. The surplus I spent at a fancy-fair. I permitted myself a splurge of colourful attire to wear down the grief of the unpleasant day.

I was just on time to board the train. The luggage I had agreed to take along to Delhi was already underneath the lower berth reserved for me. Its sight was appalling. It was a wooden box about 6 feet long 18 inches broad and 10 inches in height. I tried to feel its weight but failed to lift even one corner. I was told by my co-passengers that a few porters had struggled hard to carry the box and land it, where it lay. It was like a coffin, a deadly sight to see. It reminded me of that unavoidable day when I will have to go into one of its kind But that thought did not bother me so much as the fear for the next two days till I reached Delhi. If there was a surprise check enroute I would be hauled up to pay the freightage and penalty. I had only a little over twenty five rupees on me and from this amount the food bills had to be paid. I became restless. I hoped for the best and consoled myself.

At about 10.30 hrs. the next day, a flying squad of checking staff with a portable weighing machine boarded my compartnent. My inevitable fear, became an inevitable fact. It did not take any time for the eagle-eyed men to locate the giant among the luggages. Very politely they enquired about the owner. Despite an inner reluctance, I furnished the information they sought. They wanted to weigh my entire belongings. I had no other option but to relent They completed the weighment. After calculation they demanded Rs. 33/ by way of excess freight and penalty. This according to them was a great concession. I opened out my wallet and showed them what I had. Immediately the sympathetic team lowered the claim and wrote out a receipt for the same amount. I paid all the money I had. There was not even a paise left: I was more annoyed with me than with anyone else. I sank into a fit of accidie. Collecting myself, I thought, "I should have had the imagination to check up what I was to take along". If I had reached the railway station about ten minutes earlier, I

could have insisted on the courier of the marathon mass to have it weighed and freight paid.

An attendant of the dining car desired to know if I required lunch, which I declined. This was for the simple reason that I had no money. I started feeling tired. At stations were the train stopped for more than ten minutes, I moved on the platform eagerly to spot out at least one known face with fond hope that a cup of tea could be demanded, if not offered. Though hundreds of cups of tea were filling into the mouths of fortunate passengers, there was not even one cup to satisfy my longing.

A few co-passengers conjectured the background of my starvation, and offered to foot my food bills, but I feigned a digestive disorder. A lad in his teens snapped:

> "Sir, You have no trouble with your stomach, but there is surely trouble within your money purse"

Everyone burst into resounding laughter. I was embarrassed. I could not however bring myself to admit that I was penniless. My vanity stood in the way.

The next morning, I skipped my breakfast too. The train was scheduled to reach New Delhi at 10.30 hrs. I got physically and mentally prepared to conclude my unmemorable journey. My servant was expected to meet me at the railway station. Exactly on time, the train reached New Delhi. The sight of my servant on the platform was more than all eats and drinks I had missed. None came to take charge the dead-weight even though I waited for nearly thirty minutes. Thereafter, the unseemly box was lifted and carried out of the station by a light bridge of porters, whose charges were heavy.

Taxi drivers refused to transport the frightful object. With a great effort, a double bullock cart was procured and the loathsome luggage loaded into it. The cartman retrieved his madras from inside his cart, and wound it into a turban to protect his head. He chose to chase the bullocks and pace along. My servant and I followed the cart on foot. The animals only crawled, hanging their heads low, as if in shame, and misery, due to the unsightliness of their cargo, and unbearableness of its weight.

After an hour or a little more the cart reached the final point-a top category first floor government flat. While the cartman, my servant and I were struggling hard, and carrying the 'Coffin' up, its recipient looking cool as a cucumber, was watching our sad plight with a poker face. There was not even a whis per of thanks; much less an offer to pay the cartage. Despite all my grief. I walked away with great relief.

Chapter 53

A Change Again

Within a year, I was tossed out a again. My new place of duty had its own attraction. There was less work and consequently less worry too.

Early in1963, I was summoned to appear before the Madras Public Service Commission. That was the first time in the annals of history of Madras Police that the said commission decided promotions to the gazetted ranks by interviews. My experience with the departmental selection and promotion board in 1962 made me quite chary, if not nervous. Fortunately the commission settled my case within minutes. Questions were precise and clear. I was promoted in October 1963

I continued my deputation at Delhi. In a few months, I came upon bad days. The Chief of our Organisation visited the centre of our activity by surprise. He peeped into the room, where I worked. Since I had never met him, he enquired about my identity with my immediate boss, who accompanied him. Within seconds, the visitor walked away. He inspected our office complex and pointed

out several shortcomings. In the notes of his visits he vented his sentiments of infinite disappointment. There were a handful of my compeers, who always rejoiced in playing both ends against the middle. These souls lost no time in causing accusing fingers to be pointed towards me as the culprit responsible for the pernicious observations of the Chief. I became a targetof their whispering campaign which later came into the open as vociferous and vituperative broadcasts. These were premonitory symptoms of more misfortunes that were not long in coming. Some assignmentsunder my charge were withdrawn. Even Routine employment eluded my grasp Close companions started falling off like autumn leaves from a tree. Some vowed thatnothing short of my ouster could salvage the prestige of the institution, the fair name of which I had reportedly tarnished.

I sank into abject melancholy. There was none to utter a word of comfort. I was more than sure that the visitor could not have observed my work even for a minute. It was not possible for him, therefore, to form an impression about me either way. It is common knowledge that when one is in trouble, quite a good number of people press their noses against the windows of the unfortunate man to have a full gaze at his grief. In a situation where sadness and sympathy should fill virtuous hearts, there appears in many a secret pleasure for self-enjoyment and an irrepressible eagerness to share their happiness with like minded persons.

A couple of my colleagues proffered their considered opinion which I refused to consider. They thought that I should flee the place by proceeding on leave as that alone could save my job. Such a negative step would have offered positive proof of a self-accusatory inability to match my professional obligations. I insisted that a verdict on my calibre

should be given after I had a fair trial by a team of senior officers. I saw to it that my contention was accepted.

By appointment, I was tested for nearly two hours. My talents and techniques stood by me. I gave astounding evidence of my thorough grasp of the "Know how" and "Know why" of my job. The team which adjudged me held that I zealously wooed the profession to which I was wedded, supported and sustained it in a worthy manner Thus by my own initiative and effort, I arrested my plummeting destiny and turned it upwards.

Chapter 54

A Close Shave

The year was 1965. Indo-Pakistan War clouds had hovered for long and full scale onslaught had erupted. During the period of hositilities, one evening I was pacing along the bazaar areas in an extensive shopping complex in New Delhi. Halting at few places, I did window shopping with intermission and spent some time in pavement book stalls where browsers outnumbered buyers.

At one place when I took a casual and careless look around, I saw a group of persons whose eyes descended on me. They appeared to be observing me with keenness. I paid no heed to them but moved away. At the entrance to a popular restaurant I pondered for a while in a bid to decide if I should step in to have some eats or not. On the opposite side of the road. I saw a crowd of about 20 persons talking among themselves and at the same time eying me frequently, Soon the crowd converged on me. It was by a lucky accident that Dhanpat Rai Choudhary, one of my colleagues (who later retired as a Superintendent of police in the Punjab after being decorated twice) came that way. Surprised to see me encircled he asked a few in the assembly what they were up to. Their answer was

simple. They said I was a Pakistani spy and wanted to deal with me. Thereupon, Choudhary told them plainly that they had spotted a wrong man and they would land themselves in police custody if anyone touched me. With his imposing appearance and dignified bearing he had an air of authority about him. Voice is the expression of one's personality. Choudhary proved it. Soon the crowd melted away.

Those were days when countless Pakistani spies both real and imaginary had been caught in India. Usually the patriotic men who apprehended their victims dispensed on-spot justice. There were a few cases when spies had been reportedly beaten to death by irate mobs. When the crowd accused me of a strange and unreal identity, I was more amused than alarmed. It was Choudhary's assuring presence that precluded any kind of fear or anger creeping into me. Otherwise, I might have reacted differently perhaps to my detriment. The persons who ringed me looked very much like people with advanced animal instincts bred in slums, usually the hotbeds of lunatic spite and repellent perversion. Their appearance, dress and deportment left me in no doubt about what I thought.

How did this happen ?.....I reflected. Since there was only a little money with me, I was looking for a cheap restaurant that could fit my resources. In this process, I eyed both sides of the road. At junctions, I looked towards all directions. This odd behaviour was the culprit that ushered me into the arms of open danger. I escaped a great calamity by a razor thin edge. It was a close shave. But for Choudhary's presence and presence of mind, I would have proved Benjamin Franklin's verity:-

" A mob is a monster,
Heads enough, no brains "

Chapter 55

London

The Lord 's year of grace One thousand nine hundred and sixty seven saw the heaven of my dreams. It was a trip to London. I had heard much about this great city from some of my kindred who had lived in England for years on end.

Sometime early in January on a Saturday morning, I boarded an Air India plane bound for London from Delhi. Hardly had an hour elapsed in flight, when there was an announcement over the mike " The plane has developed a minor technical snag, experts are trying to rectify it. However, there is no cause for alarm ".

On the heels of an anxious span of twenty five minutes in the air, there was a second announcement. " Experts have failed in their attempts to rectify the defect and hence the plane is returning to Delhi ". We hovered over Delhi 's palam Airport for about 15 miuntes There was then a third announcement. " Due to lack of facilities at Delhi to attend to the repairs we are heading to Bombay."

It was noon when the plane slowly descended at Bombay's Santa Cruz Air Port. We found Fire

Engines and First Aid personnel with ambulances watching anxiously at chosen places around. There was a bump as the plane touched the runway and thereafter a drag. It was a belly landing. The passengers raised their hands in respectful homage to God for having given everyone a fresh lease of life. Hats off to the pilot who skilfully handled the emergency that was difficult,delicate and dangerous.

At the Air port we were informed about the resumption of our journey to London that night at 21. 30 hours by anther Air India plane. We were driven to the West End hotel where we lunched and rested. There was not even a rupee with any of the passengers. Indian currency is aot allowed to be taken out of of the country. All were virtually pirsoners in their hotel rooms. None could venture out without the passport of ready money.

After a sumptuous and early dinner, we reached the Air Port. We took off at 21. 30 hours. Around 23.30 we landed in Delhi, where the plane took in a good load of passengers. The stop - overs enroute were Beirut, Geneve and Paris. The temperature at Geneva Air Port was minus ten degrees. We reached London's Heathrow Air Port around noon the next day. After a few minutes of formalities with Immigration and Customs, I drove to the Regent Palace Hotel at Piccadilly Circus, where accomodation was reserved for me. The room rent inclusive of breakfast was only 52 shillings a day, roughly equal to 52 Indian rupees at the exchange value prevalent then. The long journey by air and the unfamiliar climatic conditions, I feared would cause me acute physical strain and discomfort but they did not. Throughout my stay in the far off land. happinees and health gave me good company.

I was struck by the exquisite good manners and courtly behaviour of Londoners which appeared quite natural to everybody irrespective of his age

or social status. Every question was polite and every answer helpful. " Thank you " and " Thanks indeed " were the words I heard most. The eagerness of pedestrians and motorists to allow each other the priority of way at authorised road crossings, was striking. Invariably the motorists stopped their vehicles and the obliged pedestrians acknowledged the kind gestures with salutes.

There are seversl places of sight seeing. Those I visited were :-

1. The National gallery.
2. The National Portrait gallery behind No. 1.
3. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly.
4. Trafalgar Square.
5. Hyde Park and Kensington gardens.
6. Victoria and Albert Museum.
7. St Paul's.
8. Westminister Abbey.
9. Tower of London and Houses of Parliament.
10. Buckingham Palace. Here I watched the "Changing of Guards ", a colourful ceremony.
11. Madame Tushad's Wax Wonders.
12. Hampton Court.
13. Windsor Castle and Windsor Church.
14. The Post Office Tower.

Particularly impressive were Madame Tushad's Wax models of World personalities, in their lifelike and natural poses. Equally so were the marble statues of the late monarchs of England with their spouses, displayed at Windsor. It was difficult to imagine that thess lifelike creations in both the places were lifeless.

Hampton Court, the palace on the Thames west of London, was built by Cardinal Wolsely and ceded by him to Henry VIII. This place, were the fanciful king put his queens to the sword elicited a mixture of awe and wonder from the sightseers, quite apparent from their sighs and silence.

My experience of a fog in London was unique. Visibility was reduced to less than ten feet. The powerful headlights of motor vehicles showed just a twinkle The automobiles appeared to have couplings like a railway train. The leading one inched its way periliously while those behind followed in a cautions order. At some places the fog appeared to twist and turn like a pre-historic monster, blacking out sun light and banishing all sense of distance and direction from human minds. I nearly rammed into a street clamp post which appeared far away but was only inches from my nose I escaped an accident by the skin of my teeth when my top coat extending below my knees hindered a crucial step.

Tube trains were fascinating for their speed, utility and comfort. On the moving staircases leading to and from the Tube stations, youngsters ran up or down as though they were competing in a race. It was quite transparent that Londoners put time as their most precious possession. Every one was busy, pacing fast, unlike some countries where to be busy is not a virtue and nothing goes fast except motor vehicles.

Books, periodicals and News papers sold themselves. Buyers dropped coins or currency notes in open cash boxes, in return for what they took away. Streets were scrupulously clean. Courtesy was the key note of Banks and shops. Smiling faces and courteous words welcomed you and helping hands

did your job. Cash was seldom counted by the customers who pocketed what was paid. That mutual trust and honesty formed the backbone of business needed no further proof.

The journey by a Tourist bus to Windsor was scintillating. House boats where poor Londoners lived lined the Thames. When we drove towards the outskirts of London, the scenery was breath-taking. Brooks meandered through thickly wooded regions where colourful birds sang to the tune of gurgling waters. We passed rural areas where even houses simple in construction presented a grand appearance. Parks and playgrounds that lay interspersed symmetrically and systematically amidst clusters of buildings were buzzing with life. Football and Rugby appeared to be the popular games.

The Church at Windsor is a magnificent work of art and architecture. The Windsor Castle nearby defies description of its setting and splendour. The peripnery of the Windsor castle commands a beautiful view of the Eton Public school, the Almamater of many Prime Ministers and high dignitaries of England, who shaped their country's destiny.

January folded up. February unfolded. For the Westerners, this month is a sort of nondescript one. They believe it is a time for rest after the enjoyments and excesses of the Christmas and New Year. People await eagerly the magical advent of spring. That is why, perhaps, the Romans made February the shortest month of the calendar year.

One could hardly see a soul in London streets beseeching for alms. At a few places, old and handicapped veterans sang songs to the accompani-

ment of instrumental music. If anyone extended a helping hand, instantly went up the voice of grateful acknowledgement " Tnank you, Sir, God bless you"

I returned to Delhi towards the end of February after enjoying my stay in London superbly. I realised the truth of the popular sentiment that England is spoken of as a People not as a land. The People made the land Great. They are a Great People never conscious of their greatness but ever fond and proud of their Great Land.

Chapter 56

A Handshake with "President Nixon"

On 31st of July, 1969 I was driving home from my office for lunch. I sighted a huge concourse of people in front of the office of the Accountant General, Central Revenues, New Delhi. President Nixon of United States, who was in India as a state guest was seen in the centre of a crowd, most of whom were government employees from a thick cluster of offices in the vast complex around. They were out during their lunch recess. Every one in the multitude was frantically trying for a handshake with the first citizen of the World's most advanced country. The Very Very Important person was obliging every hand that managed to reach him. The President's Security men appeared lost in the jostling crowd.

An idea struck me like a blow. That was to make an honest effort to shake hands with the great man, an opportunity for which I was sure could never repeat itself. Hurriedly, I parked my vehicle and walked fast towards the crowd which was swelling every minute. Soon I was one among the big assembly elbowing through elbowing humans, stretching out

my hand whenever I could towards President Nixon. He indeed believed and does so even now that the hand shaking foray, which involves meeting people and exchanging personal greetings works as well internationally as in domestic campaigns.

At long last, I was very fortunate to have the Presidential hand in mine. I experienced a very warm hand shake. I was happy to get glimpses of the face of Mr. Nixon. I was sure he smiled at me. Every finger of my hand was affectionately squeezed. Waves of thrill passed through me. I rejoiced at my supreme luck. It was a great moment in my life. The crowd was so aggressive that I found it difficult to pull out of it after the handshake.

When I stepped back I was taken aback. My gold ring was missing. From peaks of happiness I fell into depths of depression. A sad realisation of of my brief illusion haunted me then and thereafter for quite sometime. It was not at all President Nixon who shook my hands. He, who had relieved me of my precious possession had "Warmed my hand and heart".

The first of August 1969, was the day of my departure from service, as I had turned fifty five. Earlier I had declined an offer for reemployment. I walked out of my office with a deep sense of satisfaction that I had played my cards well, though on many occasions, I did not have good cards to hold. At my request a farewell function planned in my honour was dropped. I did not shed tears either on my behalf or for the sake of others. Nobody shed tears for me. My exit did not have the semblance of that of a man who had served the State and Central Governments for over three decades. No-not even that which a sixth carbon copy has with its original.

It was needless for me to call on anybody. Barring a couple of my immediate superiors in our small

office complex, none knew me. I could pass or cross the upper crust of hierarchy without the discomfort of recognising them or the danger of being recognised. This happy state of affairs existed despite the fact that I worked in Delhi for a decade and a half out of which I enjoyed a gazetted status for thirteen years

On return to my home town, Palayamkottai in Tamil Nadu I tried to adapt myself to retirement. Having led an active life for years on end, sudden inactivity was like an abrupt seizure by a dreaded disease which has a crippling effect. My physical animation collapsed and mental activity was down in the dumps. Years ago, I had looked upon retirement as a quiet loop hole of retreat filled with peace of mind, absolute rest and unfailing happiness. Realities proved otherwise. I felt I was leading no life at all as I had no identity. The one imposed on me by my profession had been eased out when my official life ebbed out. Without any station in life, I felt like an unwanted person for whom nobody cared.

Due to enforced idleness for the first time in my life, I became ready grist to the mill of provocation and perverse humour. I could hardly contain my temper which got the better of me at even the shadow of an irritation. In March, 1970, I returned to Delhi andsought theguidance of one of my esteemed colleagues . His response was as spontaneous as it was sincere. With his active guidance I was soon reemployed in one of the organisations of the Govern ment of India at New Delhi.

Chapter 57

G.P. Hill, I.P.S.

In December 1970, I was deputed to pay an official visit to a Police Training Centre in Central India. A message was flashed to my destination intimating the date and time of my arrival, by train.

I was met at the Railway Station by a Police Officer who drove me to a massive building with a picture postcard frontage. I learnt it was their guest house. In a sylvan setting the spectacle of the entire building was imposing. Princely comfort for its occupants was obvious.

I was shown a suite of rooms partitioned by beautiful curtains. Well appointed furniture adorned the accommodation. The beauty of the place overwhelmed me like a delightful dream. The suite manifested an oldfashioned spacious comfort in sharp distinction to modern mansions of millionaires or apartments in Posh Hotels, that are symbols of sophistication. Undoubtedly only those belonging to the highest stratum of official society were eligible to stay where I found myself. In a casual manner I asked my escort.

" Is this place intended for me ? "

" Yes,"he said.

" Well, are you sure ? " I emphasized.

" Absolutely sure, Sir " he asserted.

He then added: " The jeep in which we travelled, with the driver will be at your disposal. Neither of them is required for any other duty".

I thanked him after which he excused himself. I settled comfortably on a sofa and started reflecting. " Perhaps something has gone wrong..... or perhaps not ..... Why should I worry myself when I am not to be blamed ? ".

After a few minutes, when I stepped into the bath room for ablutions, I prolapsed. That was due to the extra fine polishing of the floor in anticipation of my arrival. I helped myself to my feet and thanked heavens for not injuring myself. After showering and towelling, I moved to the exquisite dressing table behind a massive curtain extending from the ceiling to the floor. In my best bib and tucker I dressed up with pleasure and pride. I had a look into the mirror. The face that looked back at me was clean, spruce and presentable.

In the main room was a long table, presided over at either end by a brass bowl of fresh and fragrant flowers. In the middle a tray containing mouth-watering sweets and savouries, and a pot of steaming coffee were prominent. Having not ordered for these, I wondered how the delicacies had reached my apartment. I sallied into the anterior corridor to eye the human instrument responsible for this kindly act. I was hardly out of the door, when a jawan in smart uniform sprang to attention and saluted.

" Have you brought any message ? " I eagerly enquired of him.

" No Sir, " said he.

" What for are you here then ? " I querried.

" I am with you " he added.

" With me ! How come ? " I persisted.

" As your orderly .. .. " he wanted to say something more, but I cut him short.

" I do not need any one. You may ....."
It was his turn to cut me short.

" This is my duty and I should perform it ", he replied with a certainty, obviously based on a definite authority.

I beat a hasty retreat into my dignified abode and sank on a cushioned chair. The encounter with my orderly caused me a slight upset resulting in a temporary spell of absent mindedness. I forgot to look around to locate the man who had brought the scrumptious eatables. I did not move out again, lest my behaviour should bestow on me an ostensible eccentricity or atleast a plausible oddity.

Unable to stand still with nothing to engage him, my orderly was pacing up and down in front of my room. The crunch of his boots set off an irritating refrain. I thought this to be the chief blessing of high life which assured the dignitary that his security around was alive and kicking.

The potable and eatables were still hot and I let go my nose as often as I could to enjoy their fuming fragrance. My only inhibiting fear cautioned me that if charges were levied for my accommodation and board, the slender resources at my command would badly shake my credit. I had never lived at such a high point on the scale. Luxurious living was out of bounds for my real status in life. The patent situation and the latent truth, though apparently two opposites, could not escape from each other, and I from either. Reflecting about the unknown consequences of these, I consoled myself with the thought that it would be the height of bad etiquette, if my hosts expected payment from me, when I was their guest of honour.

I approached the tray from which an invitingly pleasant smell eddied into my nose. Within minutes I proved that I was more than a match for its con-

tents. The plates and the pot soon bore no evidence of having contained anything at all. It was sheer delight to savour the sharp piquancy of the fare. Thereafter I busied myself reading news papers and magazines of which there was no dearth.

My lunch was a blend of both East and West at its best, with a dish of soup as an aperitif, lavishly buttered bread toasts, fried fish, potato chips and sauce. There was also a plate containing stuffed chappaties, salad and stewed fruit with custard topping. A mere look at these stimulated my salivary juices and I could hardly keep any distance from the dainty dishes. I enjoyed every bite and sip. The soup was a good foundation, that helped my stomach to accommodate other goodies.

A little later, the telephone buzzed. When I responded, a voice enquired, if the Deputy Commandant could call on me at my suite. I replied that I liked to do that job myself. Jumping into the jeep, I drove to his office. He came out and received me with courtesy. We moved into his room where after a few preliminaries of formality, discussions about the matters connected with my visit took place. We then set out on a round of the institution. I was gratified beyond words for the utmost readiness with which the Deputy Commandant expatiated on every thing we saw from intramural Instruction to personal participation of the trainees in the tasks of their profession.

The next day the Deputy Commandant took me along for a second round of the training centre. While introducing me to the staff he said, " This is Mr. Hill.....

I was puzzled. I said "No, you have got my name wrongly"

„How is that" he exclaimed, and almost simultaneously drew out a folded piece of paper from

his breast pocket, and placed it in my hands. It was the radio message from Delhi intimating my arrival. It read: "Mr. G.P. Hill, I.P.S." arriving etc.

I isolated the letter 'G' and wrote other letters punctuated wrongly, as shown below:-

G. PHILLIPS

I pointed out that 'G' stood for my first name (George) and all other letters formed one word, ie. (Phillips)my surname. I made it quite clear, that I did not belong to the coveted I.P.S., which stands for the highest police cadre in the country, the Indian Police Service, a successor of the Indian Police (I.P.) of the British days.

The entire mystery surrounding the dignified reception and personal attendance arranged for me which inter-alia included the magnificent suite of rooms with its uniformed attendant, who could never leave me alone even for a minute, the choicest drinks and dishes which flattered my palate, the new jeep with its smart driver to reduce even long distances into microdots, and the countless salutes that officers of higher ranks showered on me in liberal doses, exploded with loud explosions of laughter from the highest to the lowest. The precariousness of the punctuationtechnique in careless hands blessed me with the best ticket to a carefully chartered bliss.

Even today, whenever I am in a vacant or pensive mood, I drive away my blues, by flashing the the train of these memorable events before my inward eye. They serve as pokers in my ribs, bringing forth waves of pleasant chuckles to my sombre face, delightfully lighting and lifting me up.

Chapter 58

I walk on my Chalks

In 1972 I was appointed as a Consultant to the Government of India in which capacity I continued till 1976. During this period of four years, I was commended constantly and copiously. Honestly I felt that I never deserved so much of Kudos.

I had to my credit long innings of service to the Country for nearly four decades. From a humble position, I had risen to one of some status and there was hardly anything more either to aspire or achieve. Hence I resolved to renounce the sceptre and shelter of office. My employers were eager to continue my name on their staff roll. When I showed my disinclination to accept their good gesture, I was persuaded to revise my decision. Despite deep consideration and much searching of heart, I found it difficult to alter my stand. Without regret and without regard for my lucrative job, I turned my face towards retirement on July 26, 1976.

Tradition warrants that retiring personnel be complimented and feted to the top of our bent and presented with gifts or souvenirs at formal farewell functions. On such an occasion a retiree plays the part of greatness or atleast acquiesces in such a role

when superlative epithets describing the qualities of his head and heart, are showered upon him. I could not square it with my conscience to accept a similar farewell in which I did not believe. Regretfully and respectfully therefore, I declined the honour when it was proposed.

Leaving my modest cubicle on the last day of my reemployed service, a glorious feeling that I was stepping out at the right moment filled me.

"What I am,
I am,
What is enough,
is enough." muttered an inner voice.

Many come to grips with a psychic inferno when they cruise through the caudal segment of their professional days. Dreading old age and its aftermath, they live under a constant fear of lapsing into decrepitude, and succumb visibly to tender sentiments, when the drawbridges of office go up behind them.

Retirement must be deemed a well earned era of freedom after a happy release from incarceration of office. Not having a purpose in life confounds a man. This is exactly what happens to a retiree who has plenty of time on his hands, but does not know what to do with himself. Here are a few tips and truths. His scope is vast. The choice is his:

Work out a schedule of

I STUDY

a) Build up a small library brick by brick.

b) Take clippings from Newspapers, journals, magazines etc, of good reading material inter alia;—

1. Articles of excellence
2. World events

3, Wars and war stories
4. International sports and games
5. Book reviews of eminence
6. Scientific discoveries and developments
7. Outstanding humour
8. Short stories
9. Brain teasers
10. Caricatures. cartoons
11. Artistic, historical or geographical pictures, photographs, maps etc.
12. Quiz of all kinds.

c) Visit public libraries and minute whatever bids fair to widen one 's intellectual horizon.

d) Retain selectively, interesting or inspiring personal letters and even greeting cards that pour forth sentinents warming your heart.

e) Record details of conversation with rare people you meet and the impressions you gather about then. With passage of time everything you acquire will project a many splendoured dimension and provide concrete enjoyment even for a casual reading.

II BUSINESS

When financial commitments are inevitable many eagerly seek employment for making a little more money. Jobs choose and chase men who have held top posts in life. The lot and experience of others are far from happy. Technically qualified hands are in demand in the job market. The less fortunate might consider taking up work having a background easy of acquisition. One's aptitude will determine the right job. The following are suggested.

1. Insurance work
2. News reporting

3. Managerial Posts
4. Office Routine
5. Travel Agency work
6. Tourist-guidance
7. Canvassing advertisements,enrolling subscribers forNewspapers, Journals etc.
8. Contract jobs
9. Sales promotion
10. Commercial representation
11. Proof Reading in Printing and publishing Houses.
12. Self employment

Many banks extend financial help and guidance to needy persons, who seek to establish their own business.

III NON-BUSINESS

Healthy living, financial soundness and absence of woes and worries incline some to look forward to days that could fill them with happy sentiments of serving the public with a missionary Zeal and spirit of sacrifice. Social, Cultural, Religious and Political Fields beckon to these kindly souls who could actively associate with any of the following:-

A - SOCIAL

1. Welfare of the handicapped
2. Uplift of Harijans and backward communities
3. Homes for destitutes
4. Organisations which fight diseases like cancer, Tuberculosis, Leprosy etc.
5. Sanitation drive in Rural Areas.
6. Drive against illiteracy.

7. Orphanages
8. Discharged prisioners' Aid Homes
9. Honorary service under the government or local bodies
10. Family Planning propaganda
11. Collection and distribution of clothes, medicines etc., for the needy poor.
12. Moral Instruction for convicts in Jails.

B - CULTURAL - ORGANISING and PROMOTING

1. Theatre groups
2. Music Academies
3. Youth clubs
4. Youth Forums
5. Book Banks
6. Monologues and dialogues
7. Talks over Radio
8. Public lectures
9. Declamatory Contests
10. Symposiums
11. Seminars
12. Syndicates

NOTE:— In the absence of any of the aforesaid activites in a chosen area, like minded persons could lay their heads together and cultivate a congenial soil and climate forthe Right type of effort. Time and patience are bound to be rewarding.

C - POLITICAL

Politics is a luxury which very few retired men choose to afford even if they could. Many do not dare. Some do not care. For those who dare or care opportunities are not rare. The field is very extensive.

D - RELIGIOUS

Many turn Godly easily after retirement. Some become Priests or identify themselves with religious activities in their villages or towns. A few others collect donations to build holy shrines or help in the management of such places. One who is deeply devoted to God can find a hundred ways of serving his Heavenly Father.

IV HOBBIES

One or more of the following hobbies could be tried if time and inclination are favourable:-

1 Astrology
2 Bee hiving
3 Chicken Hatchery
4 Dairy Farming
5 Fish Hatchery
6 Horticulture
7 Ornithology
8 Numusmatics
9 Palmistry
10 Painting
11 Philately
12 Photography

V REST

A brief period of rest during the afternoons does good to many. A minimum of six or seven hours of sleep in the night, makes a significant contribution to retiree's health and good cheer according to medical men.

VI PHYSICAL EXERCISES

These could be practised daily keeping clear of over exertions. When your body rings the warning bell, or pulls the alarm chain, obey the signal forthwith.

VII—GENERAL

1. Banish personal pride and penchant for aloofness. Narrow down the generation gap. Mix with the young and enjoy their company.

2. Set your sights to capture a full view of the outside world, and keep au courant with interesting developments

3. Some lack communication. They seldom open their mouths. If they do, it is only to put some thing inside. Nature will ostracize such people rendering them unwelcome to society and unhappy if they happen to get into any.

4. Talk with others frankly with pleasant courtesy. Remember that life is enchanced in all aspects for those who can articulate clearly and explicitly. Have a circle of friends and meet them as often as convenient. Usually one selects friends with the yard sticks of social status, common interests, propinquity or community, Be that as it may, the choice must favour cheerful souls devoid of:—

1. fire and ire of rising tempers
2. depressing moods
3. weakness for rich foods or heavy drinks.

you could then smoke the pipe of peace cultivating a pleasant disposition ready to be amused like a child even by a trifle.

5. Guard against vanity. Otherwise, you are likely to become ready grist to the mill of mockery of many.

6. Some parents encounter difficulties with their sons. Keen sensibility and mutual adjustment consequence a good and lasting relationship. It is natural for a son after his marriage to lean more towards his wife than his parents. It is this sudden and shocking change that the peeved parents find

hard to bear, though many of them might have gone through similar situations when they were spliced

7. A possible process to bring about overall family happiness is to permit and persuade the son and his wife to have more of each other most of the time, so that the parents might find themselves engulfed in a flood of affection and regard springing from the radiant moods of the happy young couples.

8. When a parent has a long lease of life, he might reach a stage when constantcare and attention are called for. It is here, that even hitherto devoted progeny, set off audible whispers of annoyance or reluctance. When the helpless body maintains his hapless status quo, even loving hearts turn into stones. Ere long the old man is discarded like an old bullock nolonger useful for drought purposes even, by the same ungrateful souls for whose welfare and prosperity, he slaved all his life, shedding his blood, sweat and tears

9. Some aged men and women put up with the inhuman treatment they get, with their eyes soaked in tears as their love for their sons welling up from the depths of their frustrated and broken hearts, forecloses even a dream of a disunion in the family.

10. Unfortunately if you turn blind or deaf, do not despair. These are blessings of old age which one has to accept. Solace yourself with the tranquil thought that you have seen and heard the choicest and the best and there is hardly anything left to be seen or heard.

11. Many who gradually decline in health and strength, and are immobilised, agree that death is the inevitable end. For some atleast an emotional compromise with this truth, remains a receding horizon. Those who are not afraid to die dread only the physical pain they suffer and their mental anguish caused by their dependence on others.

12. Quite a few victims of incurable diseases fervently and frequently hope for an early meeting with death. Medical men who alone are competent to bring about such meetings shudder to do so. Their faith in tne ethical duty to prolong human life as long as possible, grant short adjournments to death with extended periods of life.

It is the earnest prayer of every member of the aged community that he or she should not outlive self-utility, or outlast pain and suffering, but positive answers from God favour only a few.

I enjoy my retired days much better and happier than those of my active life. In the article of health I am more fortunate than most of my colleagues and coevals. I am in high feather, thanks to the planned pattern of life and food habits I have striven hard to cultivate and continue. A rigid time-table keeps me busy from sunup to sundown. I start and end my days with morning and evening walks. On these occasions I go well dressed, so that I can command the respect of the dogs that abound around. I do not want them to attack me.

Chapter 59

Role of Senior Police Officers.

Seniors play an indispensable role in setting the moods and methods, of work of juniors. The Seniors' response, attitude and style of functioning stimulate or stifle the output of juniors.

Here is a bird's eye view of what Senior Police Officers do or could do.

1. They afford to their juniors a standard of conduct and criterion of courage which none but they can crystallize. This is achieved by personal example and cheerful readiness in leading the rank and file in critical orbits of their duties as often as possible. On these and other occasions, the importance of correct and clean uniform and the part it plays in the dignity of the profession could be highlighted. Everyone will then keep his head and heart high with his feet set firmly on the path of duty and win the affection and admiration of those whom he has pledged to serve.

2. Take up personally proposals and projects that have a bearing on expeditionary service cutting across barriers of red tape or rigorous routine and oversee their implementation.

3. Create a fascination in their staff for problem areas and raise their hopes. Such a fascination is highly correlated to zest for work and thirst for adventure. Many, accept the challenge and strive to live up to expectations. This motivates them to eagerly exceed their known capabilities to register unexpected success. Such gallant men are thus aided to form a Brother-hood of the Brave and attract others to their fold.

4. On the conclusion of noteworthy assignnents, arrange to hold and preside over workshops. These gatherings would enable the participants to relive their experiences, correct errors, increase their awareness to unknown dangers and unknown facets of known dangers. Such a harvest of knowledge helps many to add fresh laurels to their wreaths of honour during future assignments, transforming all ebb tides of defeat into high-tides of victory.

Further, these workshops provide occasions for a collective assessment of individual capacity and individual reaffirmation of collective faith in corporate endeavours.

5. Produce teams, not star performers by bringing about an awakening in juniors about the benefits of team-work and instilling in them a high standard of team-spirit.

6. Compile and maintatin a Text-book of Cognitive Science based on the experiences of both juniors and seniors in negotiating difficult and complicated situations and where exemplary work has been done with extraordinary skill. Updated by successive officers such a Treasure House of knowledge and expertise could effectively function as a Consulting Library.

7. Draw up a time-table of assessment of the knowledge and professional skill of the staff, isolate and activate the backward to take forward steps to align themselves with those marching ahead.

8. A reward is a happy recognition and return for efforts grounded on hard work, courage, alertness or astuteness. In addition, a single word of praise, 'Good', 'Fine' or 'Excellent, conveyed orally and directly by a senior officer to a junior will have an endearing and enduring effect. "I can live on a good compliment for two months", said a great Statesman.

9. A full tally of a Policeman's achievements may be reckoned on the following aspects of his work in addition to the extent of success he registers.

a) Promptness of his efforts
b) Method of Pursuit
c) Manner of adaptation
d) Means at his disposal
e) Guidance by seniors
f) Assistance by juniors
g) External forces and conditions.
h) Extent of Public Co-operation.

10. Encourage cultural programmes by the rank and file whenever possible. These would bring out, the latent talents of many and offer healthy stage shows to Policemen and their families. Such entertainments could provide a platform to Project and propagate the correct image of a policeman and esta blish healthy police-public relations. If the Police and the Public work together, they will make an unbeatable pair.

11. The inculcation and sustenance of loyalty in the Force is the sacred responsibility of those who

administer the department. Only they, can show to Policemen their homespun dignity which is their proud legacy handed down by their professional Forebears. It is this loyalty that will sustain every Policeman in hours of peril and urge him to discharge his duty with unremitting zeal and all his strength.

12. A most salutary duty of the Seniors is to drive home to their juniors at opportune moments, that their profession controlled neither by the clock nor by the calendar is a noble one to pursue, as it involves the highest of distinctions (viz) Service for the cause of others and that the conditions of their work, pay and perquisites (reviewed favourably periodically) are such, as to make their pursuit hopeful, successful and gainful. Such a conviction would instill and develop a deep sense of personal worth based on self-hood and produce a happy psychic satisfaction in every member of the Police Force.

Chapter 60

A Policeman - I

He is visible limb of law who shows the great inside of his country to those from the great outside. He radiates the civilisation of the government he represents and reflects the culture of the people he serves.

Given below is a chart that embodies some of the ideal qualities of head and heart of a Policeman. Ideals do not exist. Realities do. If ideals are kept in view and their visibility not allowed to be dimmed or diminished, realities could be stretched and strained as far as possible to approch ideals as near as feasible.

P	O	L	I	C	E
Politeness Promptness Perseverance	Obedience (Discipline) Objectivity	Loyalty Love of Duty	Integrity Insight Imagination Initiative Impartiality Industry	Character Carriage Coolness Confidence Caution	Excellence of Endeavour Eradication of Ego

M	A	N
* Motivation Method	Alertness Astuteness Adaptability	Negation of Political Affiliation, Social and Communal Affinities

* Motivation is the Psychology that springs from an employee's professional aspiration to build a rewarding career. If he is convinced that hard work is appreciated and his future is in safe and good hands, his response to work becomes spectacular.

Chapter 61

A Policeman-II

His Family Life

1. Countless men all over the world happily attribute everything that is well ordered. good; and graceful in their lives to their wives.

2. Home is the only place that promises and provides a man with warm affection, peace and pleasure, care and comfort, when he withdraws himself for a spell of sleep or rest from his professional world.

3. The duties of a Policeman are such that they often agitate his mind. Without a wife his woes are multiplied and joys reduced.

4. Marriage is conscious combine of a man and a woman who are complementary to each other. They nurse the flame of family life and nourish the profession of the bread winner.

5. Good understanding and mutual accommodation make capital contributions to the gains of matrimony.

6. I do not view a wife to be running round her husband in circles and when he coughs or sneezes offers to summon the doctor. Hers is a very noble task to infuse into him a zest for life and will to work.

7. DR. KRUND HESLING of the Baltimore John Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health has concluded after years of research that most married men are credited with a sense of commitment to their families and hence lead better, healthier and happier lives.

8. When the doors of wedlock remain sealed, the charming essence of life is rendered Top Secret. Consequently are born, bad passions that blight and blast the finer instincts of man like Morality, Rationality and good Judgment.

9. Many single men leading lonely lives either lose their appetite or eat or drink to excess. They forfeit their will to work and become easy victims of depression and nervous disorders.

10. A policeman must therefore marry, so that he can lead a happy, full and virtuous life. His private virtue is public asset.

11. He must do his best for his dependents, materially and morally. He should never be content with just a passing concern for them.

12. Welcome and appreciate genuine and impartial criticisms of his work and professional behaviour. Only then he can see his image through the eyes of others. This experience would help him to correct errors, rectify defects, fill gaps and improve his performance. He will thus achieve all triumphant attributes of a well rounded Public Servant.

"A successful man is one who lays the firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him."

DAVID BRINKLY

Chapter 62

A DOUBLE DOZEN APOPHTHEGMS

1. Security is the privilege of every person everywhere. There can be no security without peace. There can be no peace without an unrelenting war on unlawful acts of Vice and Violence. Force and Fraud. The Soldiers, Commanders and Generals in this War are Policemen.

2. You cannot help one who will not help himself

3. Keen observation makes bold credit entries in the ledgers of your Bank of Memory.

4. The frontiers of your imagination should coincide with the boundaries of possibility.

5. For an enquiring mind infinite details spring to life.

6. Relate the relevant past to the present to foresee the future.

7. Success lingers around the clock of effort.

8. Never sacrifice mindful labour for mindless laziness.

9. He who does not falter in a crisis adds a page of glory to his professional book.

10. Do not guess the nature of anything. Try to know it.

11. How to think is more important than what to think.

12. Theory and practice feed eachother.

13. The cure for indiscipline is discipline.

14. Duty and discipline walk cheek by jowl.

15. Know how is the asset of many, but know why of very few.

16. Understanding failure is underscoring success.

17. Heavy handed actions reflect light - hearted decisions.

18. A shying horse is spirited. A shying man is dispirited.

19. If you gain undue power over others, you lose all power over yourself.

20. Planning is only day dreaming with your eyes, ears and mental faculties wide open and alert.

21. The road to virtue and honour is virtuous and honourable.

22. Treat your informant with singular courtesy and his information with plural caution.

23. You hit a jackpot, if you get a wife Poor in Luxury and Rich in Frugality.

24. A Policeman after duty is like a child just from school. He is tired, he is hungry and sometimes angry.

THE END

ERRATA

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13	12 from ,,	champaigne	champagne
14	5 from	bove	above
15	mid page	job	gob
22	8 from bottom	earful	tearful
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28	14 from ,,	usulally	usually
32	15 from ,,	moonlinght	moonlight
42	last	delicattessen	delicatessen
47	Penultimate	quiet	quite
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